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**Exploring Teachers' Views about Native Language Instruction and  
Education in Taiwanese Elementary Schools**

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**Exploring Teachers' Views about Native Language Instruction and  
Education in Taiwanese Elementary Schools**

**by**

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# **Exploring Teachers' Views about Native Language Instruction and Education in Taiwanese Elementary Schools**

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This study explores teachers' views and experiences with native language education and instruction in Taiwan. These teachers are involved in Taiwan's current native language program and also experienced the Mandarin Movement which started several decades ago. Children were usually not allowed to extensively speak their indigenous languages at school throughout that period. Data for this qualitative study was collected from multiple, in-depth, semi-structured and unstructured interviews with 10 Hakka teachers involved in Hakka language instruction in elementary schools in Taiwan.

The research findings indicate that teachers need to put great emphasis on motivating students to learn their mother tongue, that the native language program reinforces the value of Hakka culture and Hakka identity, and that parents and schools also play influential roles in maintaining and revitalizing Taiwan's native languages. In addition, this research shows that the Mandarin Movement demonstrated the elementary

school's important role in the cultivation of students' language use habits and perceptions toward the various Taiwanese languages. The study also presents suggestions for continuing to implement successful native language learning for elementary school students in Taiwan.

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# **Chapter I: Introduction**

## **Overview of the Study**

There are three main languages spoken by residents of Taiwan: Mandarin, Southern Min, Hakka, as well as a number of aboriginal languages. Mandarin has been the official language since the 1940s. A “Mandarin Movement” has prevailed for the past fifty years. Children were usually not allowed to extensively speak their mother tongues or indigenous languages at school throughout that period. On the surface this would appear logical since the use of a single language in schools is convenient. After several decades, however, the high cost of this movement is that some native languages are declining. The young generations cannot speak their mother tongue fluently. Many young people do not even know the spirit and culture of the language that their ancestors were proud of. Language is the root of culture as well as of ethnic spirit. Once a language disappears, it may impact traditional culture. A lack of concern about the importance of retaining language could cause the traditional culture of different ethnic groups to gradually change or be forgotten by residents of this island.

With the change of political environment and influence of an advocacy movement, the language education policy began to change in recent years. Since 2001, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan has added native languages to the curriculum of elementary schools. According to the policy, every elementary school should arrange one class (forty minutes) per week for native language instruction. Detailed implementation procedures depend on each school’s authority. This implementation is representative of the attention now being paid to ethnic groups’ languages and culture by the government and the public.

It also means that the preservation of native languages has begun in Taiwan.

However, for students to have successful native language learning, it is necessary that schools and communities work together. Teachers play an important role in this process. Their beliefs and attitudes toward teaching and learning in their classroom deeply affect children's language learning in school. Research shows the significance of teachers' beliefs in implementing new curricula and educational policies. Teachers are not empty vessels and mere recipients of information who perform actions as required. Rather, they are more like filters through which new innovations are implemented. They react and interact with what is passed to them. They believe that they have certain roles and tasks to perform in the classroom (Al-Sharafi, 1998). As Eisenhart et al. (cited in Al-Sharafi, 1998) state that educational policies implemented without taking teachers' beliefs into consideration are seldom implemented as intended. They indicate that the success of any educational policy depends on how the policy fits with teachers' worldviews. Deeper understanding and explication of these teachers' perceptions can help curriculum designers and policy-makers in designing curricula and policies that are congruent with teachers' beliefs. Further, understanding how teachers think of themselves, their students and their classrooms, and what they believe their tasks and responsibilities in their classroom to be, will help us to create reform in our educational systems and create change within our teachers with little resistance.

Hence, it is necessary to closely look into how teachers cope with native language teaching in Taiwan. This qualitative study drew upon the perspectives of language planning, language maintenance/revitalization and second language teaching and learning.

The purpose of this study was: (1) to explore how teachers view their past experiences in the Mandarin Movement, and (2) to explore how teachers view the implementation of current native language education in elementary schools. The findings helped formulate suggestions to native language educators and researchers to encourage successful native language learning for elementary school students in Taiwan.

### **Personal Motivations for this Study**

The initial motivation for conducting this study originates from a sense I have about my language, Hakka, which seems to be facing a declining numbers of speakers around my living environment. At my home, all of our family members communicate in Hakka. However, outside the home, most of the time we speak Mandarin or Southern Min. It is normal for us to speak other languages when we are not at home. Over time, however, I have gradually become more concerned about the declining use of my own language.

After going to the big city for senior high school, I discovered that none of my classmates spoke Hakka. Since then, I have realized that speakers of Hakka are a minority in my country. Again while in the university, I found that very few of my classmates could speak Hakka. Although some of my classmates' parents were native speakers of Hakka, my peers could not speak Hakka. They told me that they communicated in Mandarin at home.

A similar situation also happened in the school where I was employed. After becoming familiar with my colleagues, I gradually learned that some of their parents were native speakers of Hakka. However, my colleagues could not say any words in

Hakka. This really surprised me. According to their description, since everyone spoke Mandarin in school, it was natural that they spoke Mandarin at home. Additionally, they commented that since Mandarin was useful in schoolwork, their parents gradually communicated with them in Mandarin. It seemed that speaking their native language was not so important.

I observed another aspect about my language during the occasion of family gatherings. During the Chinese New Year, some relatives, who lived in big cities, usually returned to our hometown to visit other family members. Very often I saw the children and teenagers communicate with each other in Mandarin. I asked them why they did not speak Hakka. They answered that their parents did not teach them to speak Hakka. Instead, they communicated in Mandarin at home. And because they were incapable of speaking Hakka, the children and teenagers seldom communicated with the elderly members of the family.

Today, with the implementation of new education reforms for native language instruction in elementary school, I was very curious about how it worked. I was especially interested in teachers involved in current native language instruction who had experienced the past Mandarin Movement, concerning their views on this new educational reform. What were their views on their instructional practice in the classroom settings?

## **Justification**

The implementation of native language instruction in Taiwanese elementary schools

began in 2001. The implementation of native language instruction belongs to a new language-in-education policy; meanwhile it is also an educational reform. Trim (2000) indicates that any process of reform must take account of classroom realities (pp. 54-55). It is teachers who face the real classroom realities. Teachers are the final line of implementation of any reform attempt, so it's necessary to understand teachers' views on this new reform and how they can participate in its implementation.

The implementation of native language instruction in elementary school is one part of acquisition language planning. The role of teachers in carrying out acquisition language planning is highly emphasized by Cooper (1989), who indicates, "The role of intermediate and lower-level personnel can no more be ignored in status and corpus planning than in acquisition planning. But acquisition planning, at least that involves direct instruction, heightens our awareness of the role of such personnel" (p. 160).

Teachers are not merely passive agents in the provision of education but "active intermediaries between state concerns and student aspirations" (Davies, 1988, p. 293). They occupy a unique vantage point from which to comment on the translation of policy into practice, dealing as they do on a daily basis with the discrepancies between "curriculum-as-planned" and "curriculum-in-action" (Prophet & Rowell, 1993, p. 199). Vulliamy & Webb (1993) also state, "The way that teachers translate new initiatives into practice are dependent upon their prior beliefs and practices" (p. 21). Woods (1994) also claims there are specific ways in which teachers' biography and entry into the profession might cause teachers to resist or appropriate particular reforms. Trim (2000) points out that even in the electronic age, a classroom still has four walls, within which a teacher

interacts with students. The practice of teachers is very individual (pp. 54-55).

Understanding current native language teachers' thoughts and views is crucial for achieving the goal of native language education. An exploration of teachers' views helps us to know their beliefs, expectations, current situations, and problems in real classroom practice. Especially for teachers who have experienced the past Mandarin Movement, they are currently standing on an historical point; their views might be different than teachers who didn't experience the movement. Since in the context of Taiwan, in the process of acquisition language planning for native language maintenance and revitalization, the school is the main site for native language acquisition, an exploration of teachers' views on native language instruction and education is necessary. This study attempted to address these concerns. The results of this study shed light on providing implications or insights to current language revitalization and maintenance efforts in Taiwan; and the practical implications of the results assisted plans for continuing native language education in Taiwan.

### **Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The overall purpose of this study was to explore the views of a group of ten Taiwanese elementary school native language teachers about teaching and learning in the native language, and to view these teachers' perspectives vis-à-vis their personal language background, influence under past language education policy in the country, and instructional practices. The goal was to deeply explore these teachers' views and make connections with their instructional practice. Another purpose was to determine the

contextual factors and constraints that encourage or impede the translation of their views and philosophies into instructional practices. The assumption underlying this study was that an individual's views were important conceptual tools by which to consider one's actions and decision-making. The following three research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are native language education teachers' views concerning their instruction and students' learning?
2. What factors do they consider as affecting or encouraging their native language instruction?
3. What is the impact of the Mandarin Movement on teachers' views toward their current native language instruction and education?

### **Overview of the Research Design**

This research employed qualitative study in order to deeply explore teachers' views about native language education and instruction. As Denzin & Lincoln (2005) stated, "Qualitative research is many things to many people. Its essence is twofold: a commitment to some version of the naturalistic, interpretive approach to its subject matter" (p. 8).

This study fell within the interpretivist paradigm. The basic assumptions guiding the interpretivist paradigm are that knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process, and that researchers should attempt to understand the "complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118).



Ontologically, reality is socially constructed through human interaction; there are multiple realities. The concepts are socially constructed phenomena that mean different things to different people. As Crotty (1998) stated, “Human beings construct meanings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. All objects are made and not found and they are made by the interpretive strategies we set in motion (p.47).” What is important in the interpretative approach is how people understand their worlds and how they create and share meanings in regard to their experiences. As Rubin and Rubin (1995) note, “social research is not about categorizing and classifying; rather figuring out what events mean, how people adapt, and how they view what has happened to them and around them. It emphasizes the complexity of human life” (p. 43-45).

To explore the views of a selected group of native language teachers in Taiwanese elementary schools, a case study qualitative approach and narrative inquiry were employed. The samples were selected based on purposeful sampling. As Berg (2004) indicates, “When developing a purposive sample, researchers use their special knowledge or expertise about some group to select subjects who represent this population (p. 36). The participants’ previous experience under the Mandarin Movement and current involvement in native language instruction were considered while selecting the participants in this study.

The major data collection strategies for my research involved conducting multiple, in-depth, semi-structured interviews, taking extensive, detailed field notes in which I recorded the settings of the interviews, relevant body language and other non-verbal cues displayed by the participants, along with my own impressions, insights, reactions and

reflections. Semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews with each participant were conducted at least three times to investigate participants' perceptions about native language teaching. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes.

Data analysis started as soon as data collection begins, using the constant comparative method. The basic strategy of the method was to do just what its name implied—constantly compared. The researcher began with a particular incident from interviews or field notes, and compared it with another incident in the same set of data or in another set of data. These comparisons lead to tentative categories that are then compared to each other and to other instances (Merriam, 1998, p. 159). The researcher continually and recursively reviewed and checked the data through the analysis; thus themes and a core phenomenon emerged naturally from the categories.

In addition to using the constant comparative method, two other types of analysis were also carried out in this study: individual case analysis and cross-case analysis. “Each case is treated comprehensively in and of itself” (Merriam, 1988, p. 154). Then, the researcher analyzed data from the ten cases. The purpose was to deepen understanding and explanation, and to “build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases” (Yin, 2003, p. 108). Cross-case analysis helped the researcher to generate categories and to see the differences and similarities among those native language teachers. It helped the researcher to find out how these ten cases were related, but would not lead the researcher to generalize from these cases to the whole population of native language teachers in Taiwan.

## **Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study of teachers' views on past language education policy and current native language education and instruction was twofold. First, these teachers were currently standing on an important historical point in implementing native language education. Their perspectives on their past experience under the past language education policy and their current teaching experience helped provide important information for native language educators and policy-makers to successfully implement native language education in Taiwanese elementary schools.

Second, understanding native language teachers' views on their current instruction provided insights into the realities of the everyday situations they face. The findings of this study showed important implications for native language teaching and learning, curriculum planning, and native language teacher education including both pre-service and in-service programs.

## **Summary**

After fifty years of the Mandarin Movement, the native languages in Taiwan are declining. Since 2001, native language instruction started to be implemented in elementary school. Since the native language teachers played a crucial role in this implementation, the researcher was interested in teachers' views on current native language teaching and learning in elementary school, as well as teachers' views on the past Mandarin Movement. By means of employing case study methodology, this study's purpose was advanced to profoundly explore teachers' views related to native language

education, its instruction and students' learning, factors which teachers consider to encourage or affect their native language instruction, and the impact of the Mandarin Movement. The findings helped in formulating suggestions to native language educators and researchers that encourage successful native language learning for elementary school students in Taiwan.

## **Chapter II: Review of Literature**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of literature relevant to this study. It begins with a brief review of the past Mandarin Movement and the origins of implementing native language instruction in elementary school in Taiwan. It is followed by a discussion of the value of acquiring native languages, and frameworks and theories about language maintenance/revitalization in the field of language planning. Subsequently, it presents a discussion of language maintenance/revitalization approaches in school.

### **The Context in Taiwan**

#### **I. Brief Introduction about Taiwan's Languages and Ethnic Groups**

Taiwan, which is separated from the southeastern coast of Mainland China by 150 kilometers of the Taiwan Strait, is an island with an area of 35,981 square kilometers. Taiwan is a multi-ethnic and multilingual society with four major ethnic groups: the Mainlanders, the Southern Min people, the Hakka and the Austro-Polynesians (aborigines) (Tsao, 1999).

Taiwan's population was estimated in 2005 as being 22.9 million. About 98% of the population is of Han Chinese ethnicity. The Taiwanese aborigines comprise about 2% of the total population, numbering about 440,000, divided into twelve major groups: Amis, Atayal, Paiwan, Bunun, Puyuma, Rukai, Tsou, Saisiyat, Yami, Thao, Truku, and Kavalan. Of the Han Chinese ethnicity, 84% descend from early Han immigrants referred to as native Taiwanese, which themselves are broken into two groups. These are (1) the

Southern Min (Fujianese or Holo), comprising 70% of the total population, and (2) the Hakka, 15% of the total population. The remaining 14% of Han Chinese originate from the later immigrants, referred to as “Mainlanders.” This group originates from those who fled Mainland China in 1949 following the Nationalist defeat in the Chinese Civil War (Wikipedia contributors, 2006).

The ancestors of the Southern Min people were mostly from the Quanehou and Zhangzhou districts of Fujian province in the southeast of Mainland China, speaking the Zhangzhou or Quanehou variety of the Southern Min language (Tsao, 1999). According to Shi (1987), when these immigrants came to Taiwan, the Quanehou people, being shop and factory owners or workers, settled mostly along the coastal areas and ports. Zhangzhou people settled mostly in the inland plains and were devoted to agriculture (pp. 1-6).

The ancestors of the Hakka were mostly from Kuangdong province in Mainland China, speaking either the Hai-lu or Si-hsien variety of Hakka. After immigrating to Taiwan, the Hakka, who were skilled in farming in hilly areas, settled in tablelands and foothill regions (Shi, 1987, pp. 1-6). In comparison to the Southern Min people, Hakka has many fewer speakers and inhabits a smaller area on the island (Tse, 1981).

The languages that the original inhabitants of Taiwan speak belong to the Indonesian group of the Austronesian family. In the face of the historic onslaught of Chinese immigrants, the aboriginal people retreated to the hills and mountains; today most of them live in the mountainous areas throughout the island (Tse, 1981).

## **II. Mandarin Movement**

### History:

Shortly after the Japanese surrender to the Chinese Nationalist government in 1945, Mandarin was further promoted in Taiwan to “foster a sense of nationhood by unifying its people” (Young, 1988, p. 323) under the assumption that Taiwan is a province of China and that Mandarin is the national language of China. The Nationalists (Kuomintang, KMT) needed to maintain Mandarin as the national language of Taiwan in order to establish the party’s political legitimacy in Taiwan. Thus, the government established the Taiwan Committee for the Promotion of Mandarin (CPM), and the Mandarin Movement began. This policy was enacted as law on April 2, 1946. Six major principles were included in this policy:

1. Implement the revival of the native languages of Taiwan and learn Mandarin by comparing the dialects.
2. Emphasize the reading pronunciation of the Chinese characters and infer the Mandarin sounds from them.
3. Sweep Japanese phraseology away and read written Chinese directly in Mandarin to return writings to their original form.
4. Study the contrast of the various word classes (in Mandarin), enrich the content of the language, and construct a newly-born national language.
5. Employ Mandarin Phonetic Symbols to reflect the will of the people and amalgamate the language with Chinese culture.
6. Encourage people’s attitudes toward learning and increase the efficacy of

instruction. (Liu, 1989, p. 36)

According to Yeh (1989), the above six principles revealed a three-stage process of promoting Mandarin: (a) to prohibit any use of Japanese; (b) to revitalize the native languages of Taiwan; and (c) to propagate Mandarin. After 1949, due to the defeat of the Nationalist government by the Chinese Communists, the Nationalists retreated to Taiwan “temporarily.” The Nationalist government in Taiwan made a vow to return to the Mainland and reunify China. Afterwards the spread of Mandarin was greatly promoted.

On May 30, 1956, the Taiwan Provincial Education Department announced that “all communication in the middle schools should use Mandarin as much as possible, and avoid dialect speaking” (Hung, 1992, p. 42). The “dialect” here means Southern Min, Hakka, and aboriginal languages. According to Hung (1992), the elementary schools were especially targeted by these rulings. For example, “dialect” use in schools was punished with a fine of one NT dollar or by hanging a “card.” Slogans like “Speaking Mandarin is a patriotic behavior” were posted in the classrooms (p. 19).

Chan (1994) also states that primary schools took the heaviest responsibility and pressure for teaching children to speak Mandarin. Children were encouraged to use Mandarin, and were also taught that it was shameful and unpatriotic not to use Mandarin. Even worse, many children using their native languages in school were punished physically and humiliated publicly. In middle schools, the use of Mandarin was enforced less; however, using dialects was still considered low, shameful, un-Chinese, and unpatriotic.

The Taiwan Provincial Government, on September 12, 1964, commanded, “All



official institutions and schools must use Mandarin during office/school time” (Hung, 1992, p. 45). As part of the Chinese Cultural Restoration Movement, the Ministry of Education, on November 26, 1970, announced six measures as part of a plan to promote wider use of Mandarin. Many of these measures were put into effect in the 1970s (Kubler, 1985). These six measures (Taiwan Provincial Government, 1975) were as follows:

1. To revive the CPM, the Ministry of Education was to immediately make unified plans and positively oversee the promotion work of the Mandarin committee at every level.
2. To support the work of the CPM, the Ministry increased funding for the CPM personnel in the provincial capital and the chief cities of each county.
3. To achieve the goals of the Mandarin Movement, the Ministry sought to encourage Mandarin by simultaneously: (a) strengthening Mandarin education in the schools and cultivating Mandarin teaching personnel; (b) strengthening Mandarin education in society and starting supplemental education programs in the villages, mines, and factories, among adults in the aboriginal tribes, and for all those who lacked formal schooling; (c) decreasing the amount of foreign language and dialect programming and increasing Mandarin in radio and television programs; and (d) making use of textbooks, records, and films to promote Mandarin language learning abroad among overseas Chinese.
4. To both require and encourage Mandarin use by various means, people’s representatives were asked to use Mandarin when speaking at conferences to increase its influence.

5. To ensure wider use of Mandarin, officials were required to use Mandarin in organizations, schools, offices, and all public areas; civil servants and, above all, teachers in the public schools were expected to set an example for others.
6. To increase interest in speaking Mandarin, various kinds of contests and activities were conducted.

Effect:

Though the goal of promoting Mandarin in Taiwan was eventually reached, a variety of problems accompanied it. Huang (1988) argued that Mandarin has expanded its domain. In addition to the domains of friendship and work, it also extends to the family domain. Chen (1998) summarized the effects of the Mandarin-only policy on Taiwan after forty years' implementation as follows:

1. Mother tongue ability had decreased in general.
2. The Taiwanese people had developed culture and language according to the standard of Mainland China and felt inferior, with low cultural self-esteem.
3. Under the forced Mandarin-speaking policy, the Taiwanese people had self-defined Taipei Mandarin as standard Mandarin and discriminated against "Taiwan Mandarin" (influenced by Taiwanese pronunciation).
4. The most functional Southern Min language was not learned in school. The second generation of Mandarin Chinese had difficulty finding jobs in private companies, and young Taiwanese people were discriminated against in government institutions. This resulted in distrust, gaps, and conflicts in society.
5. The punishment from speaking the mother tongue created psychological effects

- on children such as low self-esteem, which caused them to feel inferior about their parents, language, culture, and fellow people.
6. A person could not express his ideas freely and absorb up-to-date knowledge in order to participate in activities in politics, culture, entertainment, and economics, due to the limitations of language.
  7. The real contributors to a prosperous Taiwanese society were forgotten, and people were deprived of the right to pursue knowledge and enjoy entertainment.
  8. Language differences added to generation gap issues, along with fast changes in the society. The older generation could not demonstrate its values to the succeeding generation, and the younger generation lost their respect toward their elders.
  9. The children were unable to preserve the fine essence of traditions, precious experiences, and cultural wisdom of the folk culture.
  10. The successful generations lost roots and did not identify with their people, culture, and society; instead they fantasized (p.15).

Some studies have also been conducted to investigate the related effect of the Mandarin Movement. Feifel (1994), for example, conducted a study on language attitudes in Taiwan, employing questionnaires and a match-guised experiment. Several variables were examined in this study. Language variety spoken and gender of the speaker were the most important determinants of language attitudes. Mandarin was rated with the highest status. This study concluded that “the government’s language policy to install Mandarin as the dominant and prestigious language seems to have been very effective and

successful” (p. 203).

Chuang (2000) studied the impact of forced language on three-generational relationships among Taiwanese families. The study found that the decreasing generational interactions between grandparents and grandchildren were the evidence of a newly created generational distance. The reason was that the younger people predominantly came to speak Mandarin, while the older generation continued to speak the native Taiwanese tongues.

In studying the degree of the successful propagation of Mandarin as the national language, Tsao (1999) claims, “The phenomenal success has been achieved at the expense of the indigenous languages” (p. 347). Wurm (2003) also states that the pressure of the Chinese language on the Austronesian Taiwanese languages has resulted in all the former lowland Austronesian languages becoming extinct or almost extinct, with the remaining highland languages receding further.

### **III. The Rising Awareness of Native Languages**

Since the 1980s, due to a series of advocacy movements and the change of political environment, the Mandarin-monopolizing linguistic-cultural situation has begun to be challenged. Some Taiwanese intellectuals started to promote a new Taiwanese identity and regarded Taiwan as a political entity independent from China after 1979, when the United States established formal diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China. Also, dramatic changes took place in Taiwan’s society and political climate after martial law was lifted in 1987 (Chen, 1998; Feifel, 1994; Tsao, 1999). At that time, because of

the climate of liberation and the characteristics of the demographic majority of the local population, a renaissance of indigenous cultures and languages was aroused (Feifel). Also, a multi-layered “native movement” (Yin, 1996, p. 69) was promoted and supported by intellectuals (Chen).

In addition, a variety of cultural organizations were established to promote the status of local languages. For instance, the Taiwanese P.E.N. (the association of Poets, Playwrights, Editors, Essayists, & Novelists) was founded in 1987. Its goals regarding language were “for people to respect all mother tongue languages in Taiwan, to implement bilingual education, and to oppose any regulation which hindered the spread of mother tongues” (Huang, 1993, p. 4). Other organizations such as Taiwanese Literature Studies Workshop, Hakka Culture Research Center, and Aborigines’ Rights Facilitating Association were also formed during that time (Chen, 1998).

The changes in the political setting also contributed to elevating the status of local languages. The opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), was established in 1986, and this event was considered as the beginning of democratization in politics in Taiwan (Tsao, 1999). Afterwards, “Discussions of ethnic identity, research on Taiwanese culture, and increasing demands for the use of Taiwanese native languages began to flourish” (Chang, 1994, p. 97).

Some counties and local city governments started to recognize and promote a native language education policy to maintain the use of Southern Min, Hakka, and aboriginal languages, as well as to preserve their cultures. In 1990, instruction in Taiwanese native languages was first introduced in the curricula of the elementary and middle school of

I-lan county (Huang, 1993). Subsequently, native language education was introduced to elementary schools in cities where the DPP dominated the local government in the early 1990s.

According to Chen (1998), however, due to the lack of support and budget from the central government, the desired effects were not achieved, though the “trend of localization” could still be observed in activities of art, folk culture, politics, etc. The DPP continued to make efforts in promoting native language education and appealing to the Ministry of Education to urge the authorities to incorporate native language education into compulsory education (Chen).

Started in 1996, the curricula in the third to sixth grades began to include one class period of “native culture instruction activity,” and in the seventh grade to include one class period of “native art activity” and three class periods of “Knowing Taiwan” per week (Ministry of Education, 1995). In 2000, the Ministry of Education announced that native language education would be made compulsory in elementary school education from the 2001 academic year (Ministry of Education, 2000). Elementary school students are required to spend one class period (40 minutes) per week learning one of Taiwan’s three native languages—Southern Min, Hakka, or an aboriginal language. With this announcement, the status of the native languages was confirmed; meanwhile the rights to use and learn the native languages were also admitted in Taiwan.

### **Values of Learning Native Languages**

In this part, five values of providing opportunities for students to learn their native

languages are introduced. They are: preserving cultural heritage and identity, affirming linguistic rights, promoting cognitive and academic benefits, improving communications with intergeneration, and benefits in economics.

## **I. Preserve Culture Heritage and Identity**

Reyhner (1988) states that one of the reasons for providing opportunities to let students learn their native languages is that the native language is essential to the maintenance of the culture. He further explains, “Although facts and information can be stated in any language, the beliefs, feelings, and way of looking at the world of a culture are diluted or lost when put into another language. Language and culture develop together. The words and structure of a language express completely the feelings of a people and their culture. Supposedly parallel words in another language do not accurately portray those feelings. Therefore, changing to a different language necessarily results in a loss of part of the culture” (Reyhner, 1988, p. 143).

The deep relationship that exists between the “heart” of the culture and its language is also claimed by Fishman (1996). Fishman proposes that what is lost when you lose a language is essentially the “whole” of the culture. When people talk about language loss they speak in terms of the spiritual, of a sense of emotional wholeness, of completeness. Loss of language is often equated with a spiritual loss:

And that means they are going to lose the metaphor about the language being the soul of the people. The language being the mind of the people. The language being the spirit of the people. Those are just metaphors, but they are not innocent metaphors. There is something deeply holy implied thereby, and that is what would be lost (Fishman, 1996, pp. 82-83).

Nettle and Romine (2000) also emphasize the close relationship between native languages and the heritage culture. They state, “Allowing languages and cultures to die directly reduces the sum total of our knowledge about the world, for it removes some of the voices articulating its richness and variety, just as the extinction of any species entails sacrificing some unique part of the environment (Nettle & Romaine, p. 199).

Therefore, it is necessary to provide opportunities for students to acquire their native languages. Dorian (1987) argues that even if acquisition is not translated into use, there may be considerable value in maintenance efforts. One value she mentions is that language promotional efforts usually help to transmit the ethnic history and traditional lifeways which are typically threatened along with the language: “The self-awareness and self-confidence which can be gained through the recovery of such information have value in themselves” (p. 64).

In addition, language is a main link to identity, both personal and collective. Kulick (1994) claims the importance of the role of ethnic identity in language shift. He states that ethnic identity, or “the way in which the expression of positive and highly valued aspects of the self comes to be bound to expression through a particular language,” is the most crucial factor influencing the rate and finality of language shift (p. 7). He further explains that language is an important marker of ethnic identity. Attachment to language is as strong as people’s regard of themselves as a social group, which is influenced greatly by how the larger society regards them. A negative ethnic identity contributes to the low prestige of the ethnic group’s language, which in turn makes the group more susceptible to shifting to a high prestige language.



Hence, a core issue of language revitalization is the deeply psychological identity (Shaw, 2001). Without the language of one's ancestors, individual and collective identity gets weakened, and it is likely that the culture would die out within a few generations. As Reyhner (1988) claims, repression of the native language is destructive to self-concept (p. 143). Thus, learning one's ancestral language is essential to positive cultural identity development (Fishman, 1991; Stiles, 1997; Wong-Fillmore, 1986). Knowing the language of one's ancestors greatly contributes to a sense of belonging (Brittain, 2002; Genesse, n. d.).

When children are allowed to learn their native languages, negative impact on self-identity and self-image can be reversed. Children gain pride and confidence in cultural identity, have an increased sense of self-esteem, and gain security in knowing their heritage and culture (Jacobs, 1998). Not only do speakers of certain ethnic groups have more positive attitudes toward their own ethnic identity by learning the ancestral language, but people outside of the group will also have positive attitudes toward them. Dorian (1987) argues that community and school support of a threatened language can mitigate the negative attitudes towards the language and its speakers. These attitudes typically accompany language decline and have been internalized by speakers and potential speakers of the language (p. 64).

Pattanayak (1981) points out that instruction in the mother tongue helps in the search for self-affirmation, establishes group identity, satisfies the natural urge for cultural rootedness and avoids fanaticism. It brings the child into a harmonious relationship with his environment and maximizes the opportunities offered by the early

learning experience. It permits the adult learner to see issues in the perspective of the common man. The mother tongue curriculum maker has to understand the role of the mother tongue in concept formation, critical thinking, creativity, and imparting social values (p. 55).

## **II. Affirming Linguistic Rights**

Another value of learning the native languages of ethnic groups is to affirm each ethnic group's linguistic rights. Each person has the right to learn his/her own native language.

According to Phillipson et al. (1994), linguistic human rights are aimed at the promotion of linguistic justice and the removal or prevention of linguistic inequalities or injustices that may occur because of language. The benefits accruing from the implementation of these rights include the right to individual and collective identity. As Philipson et al. (1994) explain it, this is the right to be different, the right to identify with one's mother tongue, to learn it, to have education through it, and to use it (p. 7). To be sure, linguistic rights also include the right of an individual to learn other languages, including the official language or languages that are used in a particular area, so that the individual can participate in the social, political and economic processes of a given geopolitical entity (Musau, 2003). The use of the group's own language in private and public, in education and culture, contributes not only to the preservation of history, traditions and culture of a group and strengthens the feeling of belonging, but also contributes to the political and social stability of the state in which it lives (Trifunovska,

2002).

In many countries, however, due to political, colonial, economic, and other factors, the linguistic rights of some ethnic groups within their countries are not emphasized. Consequently, the native languages of some ethnic groups face decline—as with the native languages in Taiwan, where, due to the political factor, native languages were restricted to use in school and some public domains in the past.

McCarty (2003) points out that “More fundamentally, language loss and revitalization are human rights issues. Through our mother tongue, we come to know, represent, name, and act upon the world. Humans do not naturally or easily relinquish this birthright. Rather, the loss of a language reflects the exercise of power by the dominant over the disenfranchised, and is concretely experienced ‘in the concomitant destruction of intimacy, family and community’” (Fishman, 1991, p. 4). Thus, McCarty refers to the statement made by May (2001) and argues that efforts to revitalize indigenous languages cannot be divorced from larger struggles for democracy, social justice, and self-determination.

Smith (2000) states that linguistic rights are often overlooked in many countries, perhaps even more so today with a growing number of multilingual populations. He further explains that it is estimated that in excess of 50 million people within the European Community speak a minority tongue, as do tens of thousands more in the wider jurisdiction of the Council of Europe. The vibrancy of the rich linguistic heritage of Europe has already faded with closer integration in different states. Trifunovska (2002) asserts that in such a situation of inadequate protection of linguistic minorities, the

internal rules establishing standards and supervisory mechanisms can be of great importance in imposing certain international obligations on states.

As UNESCO's (1992) Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities specifically affirms, "States should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue." It also asserts that "States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory. Persons belonging to minorities should have adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society as a whole" (Article 4). From this document, each ethnic group's linguistic right is stated clearly.

However, as Riag'ain (1999) points out, to ensure linguistic rights, it is not enough to accept certain principles. From the acceptance of principles must flow positive and practical measures to give effect to them—reversing the injustices of generations and changing the attitude, not only of the linguistic minority. Supporting positive measures to conserve and promote a language can be both costly and difficult. But these obstacles need not be insurmountable. Again and again it has been shown that with imagination, flexibility and above all, goodwill, much can be achieved with available resources. The sharing of such resources and experiences can be invaluable, not only in cost-effective terms, but also in creating a sense of solidarity.

Currently, letting children learn their native languages is a practical way to put into effect the affirmation of linguist rights of several ethnic groups in Taiwan. Although it is

just a beginning step, it is still meaningful. It is hoped that, as Riag'ain (1999) indicates, “In a spirit of respect for other peoples and an appreciation of our continent’s immeasurable linguistic wealth, we can enrich ourselves and ensure a peaceful and harmonious future for our children living in freedom and with dignity.”

### **III. Improving Communication between Generations**

Reyhner (1988) indicates that the loss of language leads to a breakdown in communication between children and their grandparents and denies children their heritage. Employing the American Indian languages as an example, Reyhner (1988) points out, “Tribal heritage provides a sense of group membership and belonging that is badly needed in an overly individualistic and materialistic modern society. In the words of John Collier, modern society has lost the “passion and reverence for human personality and for the web of life and the earth which the American Indians have tended as a central scared fire” (p. 143).

Harding and Riley (1986) argue that it is particularly hard for grandparents who are not able to communicate with their grandchildren in their own language. The grandparents usually provide rich sources for cultural continuity to the younger generation. Inability to communicate with grandparents implies the loss of opportunity for children to reconnect to their culture of origin. Inability to connect with one’s own culture can cause identity crisis.

Clyne and Kipp (1999) also claim that language conveys strong messages such as feelings, and found that communication between generations breaks down when there are different dominant languages among generations.

In her study elucidating how dominant language discourses have impacted transgenerational Taiwanese families, Chuang (2000) looked at 12 Southern Min-speaking families. Since Mandarin became the dominant language after the Koumingtang (KMT) regime's monolingual national language policy, the younger people mainly spoke Mandarin, while the older generation continued to speak the native Taiwanese tongues. In this study, the results showed that the decreasing interactions between grandparents and grandchildren were evidence of a newly-created generational distance. The language gap resulted in different generational wishes. For instance, the grandparents wished the grandchildren could speak Taiwanese to them, and the grandchildren wanted the grandparents to speak Mandarin. Both generations in this study desired to have better communication through using the same language. Also, the older generation could not demonstrate values to the succeeding generation, and the young lost respect for their elders. This is a phenomenon of language and culture differences creating communication gaps and distance between generations.

Therefore, another potential value of providing opportunities for students to learn their native languages is to improve the communication problem between generations. When native languages are spoken, the intergenerational communication exchange offers a beginning for communication quality.

#### **IV. Cognitive and Academic Benefits**

Cognitive and academic benefits are other potential values when students have opportunities to learn their native language. The question of whether our children should

learn their native language or a second language has been debated for a long time. Some parents even worry that children learning their native language in school will result in worse academic performance. Hinton (2001a) indicates that a common reservation for some families and communities is that devoting all education to the endangered language may seem like too much—they fear that children will not get sufficient English-language education to keep up in the higher grades or college (p. 182). Consequently, some parents prefer to let their children learn the dominant language, instead of their own native languages. In Taiwan, the dominant language is Mandarin. In most families, it is common for children to be taught to speak Mandarin after they are born. Parents feel that speaking Mandarin is more useful than speaking the mother tongue after their children go to school.

Reyhner (1988) states that bilingual instruction can result in higher academic achievement. He points out that research on bilingual education substantiates the conclusion that subtractive educational programs seeking to replace native language and culture with the English language and culture cause students to fail, while additive educational programs teaching English language and culture in addition to the native language and culture create the conditions for students to succeed in their schoolwork (p. 144).

In a review of the research on bilingual education, Cummins (1981) found many studies reporting “that bilingual children are more cognitively flexible in certain respects and better able to analyze linguistic meaning than monolingual children.” Krashen (1998) also points out that bilingualism is reported to have no negative effects on an individual’s

functioning in society.

The major premise about the contribution of bilingual curriculum to minority students' academic achievement is also stated by McCarty (2003): "Students who enter school with a primary language other than the national or dominant language perform significantly better on academic tasks when they receive consistent and cumulative academic support in the native language." Based on her 20-year study of Navajo immersion programs, McCarty (2003) claims that language immersion programs proved to be successful in enhancing native students' academic achievement as well.

With a similar view, Thomas and Collier (1997) state, "In many ways indigenous bilingual/bicultural education programs have transformed historically subtractive, deficit-oriented schooling into an additive, enrichment approach—a pedagogy associated with superior school achievement around the world" (p. 16). Their research shows that minority students are likely to gain high academic achievement in a successful bilingual curriculum.

Cloud et al. (2000) argue that fully proficient bilinguals also often demonstrate certain cognitive advantages. They claim that research has shown that bilingual students perform better than monolingual students on tasks that call for divergent thinking, pattern recognition, and problem solving. Of most importance, bilingual children have been shown to have enhanced levels of metalinguistic awareness. Metalinguistic awareness is the knowledge we have about the structural properties of language, including the sounds, words, and grammar of language (p. 3).

Wurm (1997) also points out that there are many advantages and few risks to being



bi/multilingual. Bilingual and multilingual individuals have access to a much wider volume of information, tend to have more flexible minds, are more tolerant, and their thought patterns and worldview are generally more balanced.

Cummins (1990) states that children do not suffer in any way from bilingualism as long as they continue learning in both languages. His comment further implies that the risk involved can come if neither language is being taught or learned well and the children begin to fall behind in their overall language development.

## **V. Economic Values**

Another value for the effort in language revitalization and maintenance is its potential benefit in economic terms. As Spolsky (1978, p. 357) indicates, “One of the most important economic effects of a bilingual education program is in its potential for immediate benefit to the local community” (in Dorian, 1987, p. 64). Economic benefits accrue to local communities engaged in revitalization or maintenance efforts in the form of jobs for teachers, teacher-aides, teacher-trainers, curriculum and materials developers, and so forth (Cooper, 1989, p. 162).

This potential economic value of native language revitalization and maintenance is also advocated in the Federated States of Micronesia Language Policy. In early 1997, officials of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), part of the U.S.-administered Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, drafted a national language policy to promote the development and expansion of the local languages and cultures and to improve the acquisition of English and other international languages. “The language policy of the

Federated States of Micronesia is to enhance economic growth and social development through recognition of language as the carrier of the values and cultures which make us unique as a people and as the medium which we communicate across the FSM and with the world” (Federated States of Micronesia Language Policy 1997, p. 1).

In her study of the language revitalization in Quichua, King (2001) notes that many local people quickly point out that Quichua is important for obtaining teaching positions in the region, and furthermore believe that teaching positions are also available in the U.S. for Quichua speakers. This belief not only creates an incentive for teachers but also for students, who are routinely told of the positions and possibilities for speakers of the language (p. 213).

Cloud et al. (2000) also point out the economic benefits to individuals as well as society at large that result from intensive study of second and even third languages in enriched educational programs. They state, “Communities with large numbers of qualified multilingual professionals will also be at an advantage in the twenty-first century because they will be prepared to do business worldwide, no matter what the language being spoken. Increasingly, business, cultural, political, and social activities around the world call for people with different language and cultural backgrounds. Individuals with multilingual competence are able to take professional roles that cross linguistic boundaries. Cultural and national boundaries around the world are coming down in increasing numbers, and this trend will continue even more rapidly in the twenty-first century” (p. 4). Therefore, learning, revitalizing, and maintaining the native language not only brings cultural value to individuals but also economic value to the

whole society, as well as to the whole world.

## **Language Planning, Language Maintenance and Language Revitalization**

The implementation of native language instruction in Taiwanese elementary schools is in the field of language maintenance and revitalization; meanwhile it is also one kind of language planning. This section will discuss some concepts of language planning, maintenance, and revitalization as well as the important role of people's attitudes in those areas.

### **I. Language Planning**

Language planning, according to Tollefson (1991), "refers to all conscious efforts to influence and arrange the structure or function of language varieties. These efforts may involve creation of orthographies, standardization, modernization programs, and allocation of functions or status to particular language varieties within multilingual societies" (p. 16). In Davis' (1994) view, language planning is influenced by a wide variety of factors such as political, economical, social, and cultural factors, and serves numerous purposes such as "national integration, economic modernization, and traditional hegemony" (Davis, 1994, p. 14). Kaplan and Baldauf (1997), drawing from Rubin and Jernudd (1971), emphasize that "language planning involves *deliberate*, although not always overt, *future-oriented* change in systems of language code and/or speaking in a societal context" (Kaplan & Baldauf, p. 30). King (2001) states that the above definitions suggest that language planning traditionally has been conceived of as a

“top-down” affair conducted by “language planners” (pp. 21-22).

For Cooper (1989), language planning is the study of efforts to influence the language behavior of others. In Cooper’s view, language planning “refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes” (Cooper, 1989, p. 43). Language planning, then, involves conscious, deliberate, and organized attempts to influence language use or structure.

Fishman gives the most adequate definition; in his view, “Language planning is ... concerned with planned behavior towards language or languages within a community” (Fishman, 1991, p. 337). He further explains that language planning can be carried out either in a top-to-bottom or bottom-to-top pattern, depending on the original supporting agency. In top-to-bottom language planning, the central government is the initiating agency. Bottom-to-top language planning is initiated by some smaller and private agencies, usually minority groups. Most of the minority groups have neither governmental funding nor “authoritative powers;” thus the planning effort needs to rely on “voluntary support and on voluntary implementation . . . rather than on direct or indirect compulsion or the imposition of sanctions from a center of power over people’s lives and fortunes” (Fishman, 1991, p. 339).

## **II. Language Maintenance and Language Revitalization**

Language maintenance, according to Nahir (1984), is the effort to preserve the use of the native language, or native literacy, in situations where the status of the

language/literacy as a means of communication, a cultural medium, or a symbol of group or national identity is (or is perceived to be) under threat due to political, social, economic, educational or other pressures. Nahir gives the maintenance of French in Quebec and minority languages in the U.S. as examples of dominant and ethnic language maintenance, respectively (Nahir, 1984, cited in Hornberger, 1994).

The definition of language revitalization has a variety of versions. Spolsky (1995) views language revitalization as a process of restoring vitality which may produce

both a new set of speakers and a new function, spreading the language to babies and young children who become its native speakers. . . . At the same time, it adds the functions associated with the domain of home and family, resulting in various kinds of informal and intimate language use and the related emotional associations of the language (p. 78).

Paulston et al. (1993) define language revitalization as the act of “impacting new vigor to a language still in use, most commonly through the expansion of domains” (p. 276). King (2001) indicates that while the definitions set forth by Spolsky and Paulston et al. include efforts to move a language into new domains for new users, they exclude overt attempts to introduce the language to new speakers, as well as the addition of new linguistic forms. He believes that both attempts seem to be important aspects of language revitalization efforts (p. 24). In King’s view, language revitalization efforts can be understood as attempting to bring the language forward to new users and uses rather than bringing it back to former patterns of familial usage.

In Taiwan, the native languages suffered from the past language policy, resulting in a declining number of native language speakers. Because of the current native language education implementation, native languages are experiencing different degrees of rebirth.

For Southern Min, the implementation means language maintenance, since this population is larger than the other ethnic groups. For Hakka and aboriginal languages, in addition to language maintenance, this new implementation also means language revitalization.

### **III. Language Maintenance/ Revitalization in Language Planning Frameworks**

Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) indicate that the intentional nature of language revitalization clearly plants it within the field of language planning. King (2001) also points out that language revitalization can be potentially analyzed, as well as informed and guided, by concepts and theory from the field of language planning (pp. 21-22). Hence, the following is a series of theories or frameworks for language maintenance and revitalization in the field of language planning which may be applicable to the situation in Taiwan.

#### **Fishman's RLS Theory**

The first and continuing leader in research on language revitalization is Joshua A. Fishman, who studies it from the point of view of sociological theory. His writings have documented, informed, and inspired the language revitalization process. His term “RLS,” or “Reversing Language Shift,” is used widely in the literature on language revitalization today (Hinton, 2003).

Fishman states that once members of a community decide their culture is worth maintaining, they can do so only by becoming self-regulatory and seizing control and responsibility for their own language, an important marker of their culture. To achieve

intergenerational linguistic continuity and societal bilingualism, the language must be fostered in as many domains of individual and social life as are acceptable and feasible (Fishman, 1991).

Figure 1: Fishman's stages of Reversing Language Shift (Fishman, 1991, p. 87)

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- Stage 8: Most vestigial users of Xish are socially isolated old folks. Xish needs to be reassembled from their mouths and memories and taught to demographically unconcentrated adults.
- Stage 7: Most users of Xish are a socially integrated and ethnolinguistically active population, but they are beyond child-bearing age.
- Stage 6: The attainment of intergenerational informal oral literacy and its demographic concentration and institutional reinforcement.
- Stage 5: Xish literacy in home, school, and community, but without taking on extra-communal reinforcement of such literacy.
- Stage 4: Xish in lower education (types a and b) meeting the requirements of compulsory education laws.  
Type a: private schools, alternative schools  
Type b: within the public school system
- Stage 3: Use of Xish in the lower work sphere (outside of the Xish neighborhood/community) involving interaction between Xmen and Ymen.
- Stage 2: Xish in lower governmental services and mass media but not in the higher sphere of either.
- Stage 1: Some use of Xish in higher level educational, occupational, governmental, and media efforts (but without the additional safety provided by political independence).
- 

According to Fishman, stages 5 to 8 focus on establishing and strengthening the language, and stages 1 to 4 transcend the language aspect of the efforts in search of increased power-sharing. The most critical domain where efforts to stabilize or restore language should be concentrated is the home/neighborhood/community. Fishman stresses that the vitality of a language lies in informal interactions in the home and community. That is where intergenerational mother tongue transmission occurs. Efforts to maintain or

revitalize languages are essentially community-building, in and through the mother tongue.

Hinton (2001b) notes that the order of many of these steps may differ according to circumstances, and some steps may be conducted simultaneously. That is, the stages are non-linear.

King (2001) appraises Fishman's concept of "ideological clarification," which is an essential first step or precursor to RLS. Fishman (1990, p. 17) conceptualizes this stage as consisting of "consciousness heightening and reformation." According to King, "Although the particular language revitalization goals might vary from community to community, it is essential that each group realistically and carefully considers and defines what these goals should be" (p. 211).

### **Haugen's model of language planning**

Haugen (1983) states that there are four stages or types of language planning activities:

- (1) Language selection—which focuses on the development of language policy;
- (2) Language codification—which focuses on the development of a formal linguistic system and literacy norms;
- (3) Language implementation—which aims to put into place the policies and practices needed to support the new policy; and
- (4) Elaboration—which focuses on the "functional development of that language" (Kaplan & Baldagu, 1997, p. 43).

According to Haugen's model, the implementation of native language instruction in



Taiwanese elementary schools belongs in the category of language implementation, since its aim is to put into practice the new language-in-education policy announced by the Ministry of Education.

### **Cooper's framework**

Cooper (1989) suggested a descriptively-adequate accounting scheme for the study of language planning. He offered the framework as a guide to investigate people's understanding in order to describe, predict, and explain language planning. This framework covers: what actors attempted to influence which behaviors, of which people, for what ends, by what means, under what conditions, through what policy-making process, and with what effects (1989, p. 97). Cooper's framework obviously focuses on neither top-to-bottom language planning nor bottom-to-top language planning.

### **Three types of language planning activities**

Language planning includes three areas: corpus planning, status planning, and acquisition planning. The first two types of language planning activities were originally distinguished by Kloss (1969): "status planning" and "corpus planning." A third concept of planning activity, acquisition planning, was introduced by Cooper (1989).

Corpus planning has been defined as "those aspects of language planning which are primarily linguistic and hence internal to the language" (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. 38). In other words, corpus planning consists of "those efforts related to the adequacy of the form or structure of the language" (Hornberger, 1994, p. 78).

Corpus planning refers to the policies which "[intend] to change the body of the language itself, usually with the objective of improving it in some way" (Fierman, 1991,

p. 4). It includes activities such as developing new terms, standardizing spelling, and adopting a new script. Ferguson (1968) proposes three main foci for corpus planning. They are graphization, standardization, and modernization. Graphization is defined as “reduction to writing,” that is, the development of a writing system. This is the prerequisite stage for the planning of any language which does not have a written literacy tradition, such as the aboriginal languages in Taiwan. Standardization is “the process of one variety of language becoming widely accepted throughout the speech community as a supradialectal norm” (p. 31). Modernization includes “the expansion of the lexicon of the language by new words and expressions” and “the development of new styles and forms of discourse” (p. 32).

Status planning “can be defined as those aspects of language planning which reflect primarily social issues and concerns and hence are external to the language(s) being planned” (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. 30). In slightly different terms, status planning might be considered to be “those efforts directed toward the allocation of function of language” in a given speech community (Hornberger, 1994, p. 78). For instance, common status planning aims include officialization of a language, or the promotion of a language for international communication. Thus, while corpus planning concerns the language as a linguistic system, status planning addresses the uses of a language.

“When people organize to do something about the societal functions or reputation of a particular language, that is referred to as ‘status planning’” (Fishman, 1991, p. 81). The goal of status planning, in Kloss’s view, is for a national government to recognize the importance or position of one language in relation to others. The term “status planning”

has been extended to refer to the allocation of languages to be used for specific purposes, such as an official language, a medium of instruction, or a vehicle of mass communication (Cooper, 1989; Fasold, 1984).

Acquisition planning was developed conceptually by Cooper in the late 1980s. Cooper (1989) argued that acquisition planning was a necessary addition to the field because so many language planning efforts focus on language spread or on the users of the language, yet fall outside of the domain of both status and corpus planning. Acquisition planning efforts target the (potential or actual) users of the language, including “efforts to influence the allocation of users or the distribution of languages,” most often through the creation or improvement of opportunities or incentives to learn them (Hornberger, 1994, p. 78). Examples of acquisition planning include attempts to create or improve opportunities or incentives to acquire a language through its promotion in school, mass media or work spheres. The implementation of native language education in Taiwanese elementary schools is one kind of acquisition planning.

### **Hornberger’s integrative framework**

Hornberger (1994) developed an integrative framework of language planning goals (see Table 1). Hornberger emphasizes that while the parameters of the framework are formed by the matrix of language planning types and approaches, it is the language planning goals which identify the range of choices available within those parameters.

Table 1: Hornberger's Language planning goals: An integrated framework (Hornberger, 1994)

Approach	Policy Planning (on form)	Cultivation Planning (on function)
Types	Goals	Goals
Status planning (about uses of language)	Standardization status Officialization Nationalization Proscription	Revival Maintenance Interlingual communication International Intranational Spread
Acquisition planning (about users of language)	Group Education/School Literature Religion Mass Media Work	Reacquisition Maintenance Foreign language/ Second language Shift
Corpus planning (about language)	Standardization Corpus Auxiliary code Graphization	Modernization Lexical Stylistic Renovation Purification Reform

		Stylistic simplification Terminological unification
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Based on Hornberger’s framework, current native language instruction in Taiwanese elementary schools belongs to the realm of “cultivation planning.” Cultivation planning is “seen as attending to matters of language, at the microscopic level, emphasizing ways of speaking/writing, and their distribution, and [is] mainly concerned with literacy usage” (Hornberger, 1994, p. 79). With respect to Hornberger’s (1994) integrative language-planning framework, the implementation of native language education into elementary school is an instance of language-acquisition planning with the goal of cultivating reacquisition, maintenance, and/or second language acquisition of the native languages. It pursues the recuperation and revitalization of the indigenous languages in Taiwan.

#### **Details about acquisition planning**

According to Cooper’s (1989) preliminary framework, acquisition planning can be classified into nine cells formed by the interaction of two variables: overt goal (acquisition, reacquisition, maintenance) and the chief focus of the method employed to attain the goal (opportunity to learn, incentive to learn, both opportunity and incentive to learn) (p. 160).

In Cooper’s view, examples of acquisition planning can be distinguished from one another on at least two bases: (1) the overt language planning goal and (2) the method employed to attain the goal. At least three overt goals are distinguished: (a) acquisition of

the language as a second or foreign language, (b) reacquisition of the language by populations for whom it was once a vernacular, and (c) language maintenance. Maintenance of a language implies its acquisition by the next generation. When a language declines, smaller and smaller percentages of ensuing generations acquire the language. Prevention of decline requires maintenance of acquisition (Cooper, 1989, p. 159).

These three goals are simultaneously included for acquisition of native languages in elementary schools in Taiwan. Mandarin can be regarded as the first language for most children, who already speak it at home. Hence, learning the native languages at school can be regarded as second language acquisition. Children basically go by what their parents' native languages are, so choosing one of the native languages to learn at school is reacquisition of the native language. At the same time, it is also language maintenance. As Cooper mentions, since the language is declining, this is a means of preventing further decline.

Cooper (1989) distinguishes three types of means employed to attain acquisition goals: those designed primarily to create or to improve the *opportunity* to learn, those designed to primarily to create or to improve the *incentives* to learn, and those designed to create or improve both opportunity and incentive simultaneously (p. 159).

Methods which focus upon the opportunity to learn can, in turn, be divided into direct and indirect methods. The former include classroom instruction, the provision of materials for self-instruction in the target language, and the production of literature, newspapers, and radio and television programs in simplified versions of the target

language. Indirect methods include efforts to shape the learners' mother tongue so that it will be more similar to the target language, which will then presumably be easier to learn. An example of methods which focus upon the incentive to learn is the inclusion of English as a compulsory subject in the Israeli secondary-school matriculation examination, a requirement which encourages those pupils who want a matriculation certificate to take their English courses seriously. Methods simultaneously enhancing opportunity and incentive to learn use the target language as the medium of interaction for contexts in which the learner must enter or wants to enter. Examples are immersion or bilingual educational programs (Cooper, 1989, p. 160).

Acquisition goals are attained in elementary schools in Taiwan by creating an opportunity (the native language instruction class) for students to learn native languages. Schools employ a direct method by means of classroom instruction and providing self-instruction in the native languages.

#### **IV. The Role of People's Attitudes toward Language Maintenance/Revitalization**

Language attitude has been seen as an influential factor which may bring about the successful planning and policy of language maintenance and revitalization. As in his emphasizing the importance of language attitudes on language policy implementation, Lewis (1981) claims that any policy for language, especially in the system of education, has to take into account the attitude of those likely to be affected. In the long run, no policy will succeed which does not do one of three things: conform to the expressed attitudes of those involved; persuade those making policy; or seek to remove the causes

of the disagreement. In any case, knowledge about attitudes is fundamental to the formulation of a policy as well as to success in its implementation (p. 262).

Dorian (1987) argues for the worth of language revitalization efforts which are not deemed successful because they do not reinstate mother-tongue transmission of the threatened language. She argues that there are at least four possible reasons for undertaking efforts of this kind, sometimes in the face of almost certain failure (p. 63). She points out, “One of the commonest reasons for failure—negative attitudes internalized by the speakers or potential speakers themselves—is in itself a serious reason for attempting to promote the language” (p. 63). Dorian states that in such a climate, the gesture of school and community support can act as a corrective in a psychological sense, even when the practical consequences of promotion are unlikely to be significant (p. 64).

Kulick (1992) states that “The conceptions people have about language, children, the self, and the place of these in those people’s interpretation of their social world are central to an understanding of why they come to abandon their language” (p. 17).

Ericksen (1991) also emphasizes that language revitalization efforts are critically important for many minorities in that they mark “the end of a long history of discrimination and stigmatization and the beginning of a new and positive identity” (in Huss, 1997, p. 15).

Therefore, in order to implement language revitalization and maintenance successfully through language planning, people’s attitudes toward the target language are critical. It is crucial to involve educators, parents, community members, political leaders, the media, and the business community because they are all involved in changing public



attitudes and behaviors necessary for the efforts of language maintenance and revitalization. The attitudes of speakers of the target language are especially important. If they lack enthusiasm and true involvement, then language planning efforts will be in vain.

## **Language Maintenance/Revitalization Approaches in School**

### **I. The Role of the School**

When planners try to promote second or foreign language acquisition, they often tend to focus on the school system. In discussing the task of fostering native language, Fishman (1991) stated that the importance of the school is best designated as “initiator” and “contributory” rather than as substantially “unique” or “independent.”

In Fishman’s view, schools are often important in introducing second language acquisition in terms of initiating literacy acquisition, repertoire expansion, and attitudinal commitments. Fostering native languages requires literacy because “it is only via literacy that most modern and encompassing reward systems become operative” (p. 372). Schools are the place where students can have a primary and effective access to literacy. In addition, schools often initiate repertoire expansion. That is, they introduce students to cultivated speech (often via extensive exposure to cultivated reading and writing), i.e., to non-vernacular varieties of the mother tongue that differ from the daily, spoken, informal and “untutored” varieties (pp. 372-373).

Finally, schools are often important in enriching their students’ attitudinal and overt-implementation commitments to language by providing and stressing the

historical, cultural and moral rationales for such commitments. Via lessons and discussions about language and by actively involving students in school-and-society projects on behalf of language, schools are often the first agencies to articulate a given language. By repeatedly implementing and activating its associated culture and by doing so with positive affect, a language creates a social bond between the community of users of that language and its historically associated culture, symbolism and identity (p. 372).

However, although schooling plays a significant role in connection with some aspects of language use and behavior toward language, Fishman (1991) points out that the task of fostering native language still requires extensive and recurring pre-school, out-of-school and post-school societal reinforcement (p. 372). Fishman (1982) claims that “Schools alone cannot assure language maintenance in modern, urban, industrial societies, because schools are only a ‘secondary status system’” (p. 21). The major role of schools is to prepare students to be able to function in a “‘primary status system,’ such as the home, community, economic, political, and military systems.” Fishman perceived these systems, either primary or secondary, as reward systems for individuals and the community (Fishman, 1985). He further stated that if these more primary systems required only the use of the socially dominant languages, schools themselves could not counteract the gradual loss of subordinate languages. For instance, if the use of Mandarin can provide an individual with full access to the primary reward systems, it is unlikely that schools can do much to foster the use of other native languages. Therefore, schools frequently “need the support of the more powerful primary systems in order to attain their educational goals” (Fishman, 1982, p. 22).

Cooper (1989) also indicates that no matter how accomplished the schools are in imparting language acquisition, they are unlikely to lead to the language's *use* outside the classroom unless there are practical reasons for such use (p. 161). He further cited the Irish experience to demonstrate this limitation. By the time Ireland gained its independence, it had become an Anglophone country. Outside the Gaeltacht, there is little need for Irish in one's day-to-day life. Government regulations requiring a knowledge of Irish as a condition of employment may have created incentives to learn Irish, but when, as is often the case, there is little need for Irish on the job, there is little reason to continue using Irish once one has been hired (p. 161).

Similarly, Garcia (2003) states that schooling alone cannot provide the many contact hours needed to develop or maintain productive skills in language. While school-based programs can provide valuable linguistic input in the home language, schooling alone is not the answer to ethnic language maintenance. In keeping with Fishman's emphasis, the home and community must also crucially be involved in the effort to retain the ethnic language.

Therefore, we know that while the school plays a significant role in language planning for reacquisition and maintenance of native languages, the cooperation of the home, community, and the whole society are also important in the process of native language acquisition.

## **II. School-Based Programs**

Hinton (2001b) outlines five categories of language revitalization approaches:

school-based programs, children's programs outside the school (after-school programs, summer programs), adult language programs, documentation and materials development, and home-based programs. Within school-based programs, Hinton highlights three common types: as a subject, bilingual program, and immersion program (p. 7).

### **Teaching of the target language as a subject**

The first example is teaching the target language as a subject. The target language is treated as another course to be taught within the school day. For children it is often a set number of hours per week included as part of the curriculum in school or as an after-school program. For adults it is most often evening classes held once a week either in the community or through a local accredited post-secondary institution (Ignace, 1998). Blair et al. (2002) and Hinton (2001b) indicate that this is probably the most common form of language teaching, as it is the most accessible initiative for many communities; however, it is not a method that generally creates fluent speakers. Hinton (2001b) further indicates that this method is good for developing language awareness and can also teach a basic level of communication. However, the main disadvantage with teaching language as a subject is that there usually aren't enough contact hours to bring a student to fluency (p. 7). Since students' contact with the target language is limited to the classroom, whether or not students use the target language outside the classroom depends on whether the communities offer such opportunities.

### **Bilingual Program**

According to Hinton (2001b), the second example of a school-based approach to

language revitalization is bilingual education. In a bilingual classroom, a portion of the instruction is taught in the minority language. In the United States, there have been many bilingual initiatives since the late 1970s following the availability of funding (Title VII bilingual education funds). The funding was targeted for minority language groups whose children's first languages were not English. Bilingual models in the U.S. have been found to be more successful for language maintenance than for language revival. Hinton (2001a) points out that in general, because of the transitional emphasis of government policy and the assumption that the ancestral tongue is learned at home, the development of effective language teaching methods for indigenous languages was not supported under bilingual education (p. 180). There generally exists a large discrepancy between resources and training for the English portion of the school day versus the few written materials and trained speakers available to the aboriginal program (Hinton, 2001a, p. 8).

The resource problem also happens in other contexts. In his studies discussing the decline of Nahuatl and the new bilingual maintenance programs in central Mexico, Rolstad (2002) points out that the implementation of a bilingual program there also faces the obstacles of a lack of qualified bilingual teachers and resources or funding available to teachers.

### **Indigenous Language Immersion Programs**

The immersion model is indicated as Hinton's third school-based program among language revitalization approaches. This model carries out all classroom instruction in the target language. In Hinton's (2001a) view, immersion programs have two benefits: "They provide sufficient exposure to the language to help produce fluent speakers, and they also

provide venues for using the language in real communication” (p. 182). However, even within this model it is still imperative for the community to provide opportunities for further communication outside of the school program to achieve native-like fluency (Michel, 2005).

The first well-known example of an aboriginal immersion program is the Maori initiative. The Maori have been considered one of the most successful models in indigenous language revitalization, and much of their success has come from Te Kohanga Reo, or “language nests” programs (Kirkness, 1998). This program, which began in the early 1980s, is an early childhood total immersion program exclusively using the traditional language as the vehicle for interaction and instruction (Fleras, 1987; King, 2001; Kirkness, 1998; Te Kohanga Reo, 2004).

The second well-known example of an aboriginal immersion program is the Hawaiian initiative. Indigenous immersion in Hawaii is arguably the most dramatic language revitalization success story to date, certainly within the U.S. (McCarty, 2003). The Hawaiian immersion pre-schools—or *Aha Punana Leo*, “language nest gathering” (Wilson & Kamana, 2001, p. 149)—are designed to strengthen the Hawaiian *mauli*—culture, worldview, spirituality, morality, social relations, “and other central features of a person’s life and the life of a people” (Wilson & Kamana, 2001, p. 161). The family-run pre-schools, begun in 1983, enable children to interact with fluent speakers entirely in Hawaiian. Immersion schooling has succeeded in strengthening the Hawaiian *Mauli*, awakening consciousness and self-determination within the Native Hawaiian community, and enhancing children’s academic success. In the process, the program has

served as a model and a catalyst for indigenous language reclamation efforts throughout the U.S. (McCarty, 2003).

Navajo immersion and Keres immersion are the other two good examples of language revitalization efforts within the U.S. These two programs are characterized by sustained community-based consciousness-raising and committed efforts by the parents.

In the Navajo immersion program, the initial curriculum was kept simple: developmental Navajo, reading and writing first in Navajo, then English; math in both languages, with other subjects included as content for speaking or writing (Holm & Holm, 1995, pp. 149-150). McCarty (2003) states that the program placed a heavy emphasis on language and critical thinking, and on the writing process and co-operative learning. In the lower grades, all communication occurred in Navajo. By the second and third grades, the program included a half-day in Navajo and a half-day in English. Fourth graders received at least one hour each day of Navajo instruction. In addition, parental involvement played a critical factor in this process. As Arviso and Holm (2001) indicate, program leaders insisted that an adult caretaker or relative “spend some time talking with the child in Navajo each evening after school” (p. 210). In short, immersion students were well on their way to accomplish what research on bilingual education around the world indicates: They were acquiring Navajo as a heritage language “without cost,” performing as well as or better than their non-immersion peers by the fifth grade (Holm & Holm, 1995, p. 150; Arviso & Holm, 2001, pp. 211-212).

Keres Immersion includes two Keres-speaking tribes, Acoma and Cochiti, both located in the U.S. Southwest. To model natural dialogue, both programs paired teams of

fluent speakers with small groups of students. At Cochiti, pairing fluent with partially fluent speakers/teachers enabled young people and adult teacher-apprentices to learn Keres together. Language teachers in the program emphasize communication-based instruction and the use of demonstrations, gestures, and other contextual cues. The focus in both programs is on strengthening oral skills rather than literacy. The accomplishment of the program implementation is that children have gained conversational ability in Keres, and there is growing evidence of native language use community-wide (McCarty, 2003).

Stiles (1997) compares four indigenous language programs: Cree Way in Quebec, Hualapai in Arizona, Te Kohanga Reo in New Zealand, and Punana Leo in Hawai'i. The revitalization or rejuvenation of an endangered language is a significant outcome for the programs' communities. He concludes that successful programs need to link language and culture, need written teaching materials, community support and parental involvement, and government support. These elements are also the reason that replication of the programs has been and will continue to be possible. Each of these programs has developed curriculum that combines indigenous language and cultural instruction. Language is learned as a by-product of the cultural heritage. The programs develop their own written teaching materials, which take years of dedicated work. Further, the most important element for these programs is the support of the parents in the home. In addition to reinforcing the children's native languages used at home, parental involvement in these programs has extended to language classes, in-service training, classroom participation, resource development, and teacher certification. The support of



community members and tribe elders also insures the success of the programs. Language planning and problem solving with community support have developed strong adaptable components. Despite the successful components of these four programs, Stiles also indicates that some common problems exist within the programs, including teacher availability, teacher training, and funding. Sources on all four of these programs mentioned the problem of finding fluent speakers of the language with any training to be teachers.

Hinton (2001a) makes a final general point about language revitalization in the classroom setting. He points out that the classroom is the most efficient place to teach the target language, but no classroom program is sufficient unto itself; it must be accompanied by family commitments and other community progress. One reason that Maori and Hawaiian programs have worked so well is that their school programs have developed out of grassroots community movements that include other components to language revitalization (p. 182). As Hinton indicates, “Bringing the language back as the first language of the home is the true heart of language revitalization. No school can make that happen, only families can. However, the schools can play a vital role in helping to make the transition to home speaking possible” (p. 182).

### **III. Teaching the Native Language**

The core of language maintenance/revitalization activity in school involves second language teaching. Thus, it is necessary to discuss the methodology related to teaching the native language.

Hinton (2001a) indicates that most of the literature on second-language teaching methods can be applied to endangered languages. But Hinton stresses that teaching endangered languages has important differences from teaching foreign languages or ESL. He states that someone who teaches an endangered language must keep those differences in mind and adapt whatever is read to the specific situation at hand—some information will be useful, but some will not (p.179).

According to Hinton (1999), the differences between teaching endangered languages and teaching world languages are that firstly, resources including pedagogical materials, teacher sources, and teachers' expertise could be slim for teaching an endangered language. In addition, goals of teaching endangered languages are different from those of teaching foreign languages; students of the latter aim to learn the language in order to read literature in that language or communicate with native speakers. For an endangered language, the goals are much larger and the stakes much higher. The language has ceased being the language of communication, so not only must people learn to speak it, but communicative functions of the language must be recreated in order for it to be used again. Hinton suggests that although the classroom is usually the site of learning, for a language to be revitalized it must also leave the classroom and be brought back as the language of communication within the community. Hinton suggests that the goal, then, is Reversing Language Shift (RLS), as termed by Fishman (1991).

Hinton (2001a) points out that many attempts in the public school to teach endangered languages have had disappointing results because of poorly developed teaching methodology. He further indicates that the programs involve overly repetitive

review of a small range of vocabulary, or spend too much time “explaining” the language rather than actually using the language. The programs also depend too much on writing things down rather than actual learning. In addition, they never get to the point of teaching people how to talk in complete sentences or how to communicate about real things (p. 181).

In teaching a native language, Reyhner (1988) recommends “The Natural Approach to learning languages” developed by Krashen and Terrell (1983). The four principles of this approach are:

1. Comprehension precedes production.
2. Language production, whether oral or written, is allowed to emerge in stages: first, nonverbal communication; second, by single words such as yes or no; third, by combinations of two or three words; fourth, by phrases; fifth, by sentences; and finally, by more complex discourse.
3. The goal of language acquisition is communication.
4. Classroom activities must not put any kind of stress on the students to perform beyond their capabilities.

In addition, Reyhner emphasizes that it is important that environments both inside and outside of school be provided where a student can use newly acquired language skills. Students must also have environments where they can use the language they are learning in conversation.

In Hinton’s (2001a) view, the key factors in successful language teaching and learning are:

- (1) If the goal is to develop oral competence, the main methods of teaching should be oral (rather than written).
- (2) Language lessons should be “immersion” style, where solely the target language is used.
- (3) Learners need to be engaged in real communication efforts, rather than just hearing and spouting language.
- (4) Lessons should include repetition without repetitiveness.
- (5) Activities, active physical work, and games related to the vocabulary or phrases being learned help the learning process in many ways by making it more interesting, keeping up the attention level, associating words with actions, and so on.
- (6) Comprehension precedes production. Activities regarding new material should keep this in mind: The first presentation leads to *understanding*, and later activities test *recognition*. Mimicking may begin with the first presentation, but after recognition, true production will finally develop.
- (7) Teaching grammar can be implicit rather than explicit.
- (8) Criticism discourages learners from speaking and participating, thus discouraging them from learning. Praise and positive forms of correction enhance the learning process.

Supahan and Supahan (2001) state that their use of communication-based instruction (CBI) and the five-step lesson plan are successful in having a real, positive, and lasting impact on the rejuvenation of the Karuk language, which is spoken in Northern California. According to Supahan and Supahan, the CBI method involves the use of the targeted

language in all instruction, in context, and in ways that communicate. It means that language instruction is to be relevant to students. CBI has as its focus natural communication between people. The lessons consist of language which communicates things important to Karuk life, whether that means a long time ago or today. The students are always involved in hands-on learning. A CBI lesson also includes a great deal of modeling. In the classroom, encouragement is vital for students' learning. Also, before teaching a lesson, teachers always ask themselves what it is they want their students to be able to communicate. Once teachers know what the function or purpose is, then teachers work backward from there to design lessons that will lead students toward that end.

Supahan and Supahan indicate that CBI lessons are organized into five steps:

Step 1: Setting the stage: to provide a look at what the upcoming language lessons will be about and to motivate students to learn.

Step 2: Comprehensible input: Vocabulary is introduced in a comprehensible way.

Step 3: Guided practice: to guide students in activities which give them the opportunity to practice the language presented.

Step 4: Independent practice: a time for students to use what they have learned to generate their own language.

Step 5: Assessment: Assessment can take many forms and may be an ongoing process.

The main characteristic of the above approaches to teaching the native language is that emphasizing students' communication competence is the first priority. In addition, integrating students' lives into the classroom learning is also stressed in order to motivate student's learning interests. Also, the instructor needs to play an encouraging role in

helping students' native language acquisition.

Hammerly (1985) indicates that the "ideal" method of teaching the native language in school would take all facts into account and borrow the best that existing and former methods have to offer. It would add innovations as needed and combine everything into a harmonious new whole in agreement with a sound, comprehensive theory adapted to the characteristics of the learners, program goals, and learning conditions (p. 165).

#### **IV. Teachers' Roles in Language Maintenance and Revitalization**

Low-level decisions to support higher-level ones are important in language planning. This is also a critical factor which influences the success of the whole language planning activity. Cooper (1989) states that in language planning, implementation in the micro-level is as important as in the macro-level. He claims that acquisition planning is a feature of the instructional enterprise at every level of organization, from the Director General of the Ministry of Education to the classroom teacher (p. 160).

The role of teachers in the acquisition planning process is emphasized by Cooper. He refers to the definition made by C. H. Prator, one of the few scholars who regard language teaching as an object of language planning. Prator states this point forcibly: "Language policy is the body of decisions made by interested authorities concerning the desirable form and use of languages by a speech group. It also involves consequent decisions made by educators, media directors, etc., regarding the possible implementation of prior basic decisions ... Language policy-making involves decisions concerning the teaching and use of language, and their careful formulation by those empowered to do so,

for the guidance of others” (Prator cited by Markee, 1986, p. 8).

Cooper elaborates Prator’s definition and points out, “The decision to emphasize specific skills or linguistic forms in a language class—even the choice of a textbook—could become a part of language policy. The latter should thus be one of the primary concerns of language teachers. The entire process of formulating and implementing is best regarded as a spiral process, beginning at the highest level of authority and, ideally, descending in widening circles through the ranks of practitioners who can support or resist putting the policy into effect” (Cooper, 1989, p. 160).

According to Cooper, Prator’s view of language planning as a sequence of decisions of smaller and smaller scope is attractive for two reasons. First, at least some of the same principles and factors which constrain planning at the highest levels may be presumed to operate at lower levels as well. Second, his view provides a bridge from micro-level implementation (Cooper, 1989, p. 38).

Markee (1988), who also considers language teaching as a form of language planning, comments by using the example of English instruction: “A teacher’s decision to use a particular textbook is just as much a policy-decision as a Ministry of Education’s prescription that English will be taught for X number of hours a week in all secondary schools.”

As Cooper (1989) indicates, “The role of intermediate and lower-level personnel can no more be ignored in status and corpus planning than in acquisition planning. But acquisition planning, at least that involving direct instruction, heightens our awareness of the role of such personnel” (p. 160). Therefore, we can see that the role of teachers in

carrying out acquisition planning is highly emphasized by Cooper.

## **V. Teachers' beliefs**

As teachers play an important role in the acquisition planning process in terms of their direct instruction of students, an exploration of the native language teachers' views, opinions, thoughts, and beliefs regarding their roles and the whole language planning implementation process is necessary. Hence, related literature on teachers' beliefs is presented here.

### Beliefs

What are beliefs? Rokcach (1968) describes a belief system "as having represented within it, in some organized psychological but not necessarily logical form, each and every one of a person's countless beliefs about physical and social reality" (p. 2). Moreover, he concludes that beliefs contain a cognitive, an affective, and a behavioral component and, therefore, act as influences on what one knows, feels, and does. Similarly, Nisbett and Ross (1980) describe all human perception as being influenced by beliefs; thus beliefs influence the ways in which events are understood and acted upon. In summary, Da Ponte (1994) describes beliefs as "the incontrovertible personal 'truth' held by everyone, deriving from *experience* or from fantasy, having a strong affective and evaluative component" (p. 199).

Researchers agree that "beliefs evolve as individuals are exposed to the ideas and mores of their parents, peers, teachers, neighbors and various significant others. They are acquired and fostered through schooling, through the informal observation of others, and



through the folklore of a culture, and they usually persist, unmodified, unless intentionally or explicitly challenged” (Lasley, 1980). That is, beliefs evolve and develop over time through an individual’s socialization process in the daily interaction with other members of the society (Lortie, 1975).

Pajares (1992) had a detailed account of the nature of beliefs. Pajares finds that beliefs have traveled under the guise of “attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, implicit theories, explicit theories, internal mental processes, repertoires of understanding” (p. 309). He further indicates that beliefs are created through a process of enculturation and social construction. Therefore, important factors include the incidental learning process people experience during their lives, their assimilation, and aspects of their culture. Researchers explain that classroom behaviors are a result of beliefs being filtered by experience (Pajares, 1992, p. 312).

### *Teachers’ beliefs*

A similar characterization is given in educational research, where teachers’ beliefs are thought to have a filtering effect on all aspects of their thoughts, judgments, and decisions (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Munby, 1982; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Pintrich, 1990). According to Kagan (1992), “teacher belief is a particularly provocative form of personal knowledge that is generally defined as pre- or inservice teachers’ implicit assumptions about students, learning, classrooms, and the subject matter to be taught” (p.65-66).

However, a mutually agreed-upon definition of teachers’ beliefs is far from complete. In fact, much of the research on teachers’ beliefs is plagued “by definitional problems,

poor conceptualizations, and differing understandings of beliefs and belief structures” (Pajares, 1992, p. 307). Teachers’ beliefs, characterized by Pajares (1992) as a belief substructure, do not operate in isolation, but are instead interrelated to all other beliefs.

In spite of great variety in focus, empirical studies have produced quite consistent findings in regard to two generalizations. First, teachers’ beliefs appear to be relatively stable and resistant to change (e.g., Brousseau, Book, & Byers, 1988; Hermann & Duffy, 1989). Second, a teacher’s beliefs tend to be associated with a congruent style of teaching that is often evident across different classes and grade levels (e.g., Evertson & Weade, 1989; Martin, 1989).

#### *The importance of exploring teachers’ beliefs*

The importance of exploring teachers’ beliefs emerges from the context of teachers’ classroom practice. Over the past decade or so, research on teaching has increasingly suggested that, to gain a more complete understanding of how classroom instruction affects students, researchers need to view the teacher not only as one who engages in certain classroom behaviors, but also as an active processor of information before, during, and after classroom instruction (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Shavelson & Stern, 1981; Shulman & Elstein, 1975).

Teachers assume a critical role in creating classroom environments that encourage students to become active, self-motivated learners. Thus, classroom interventions aimed at improving both student motivation and their academic outcomes should consider teachers’ perceptions regarding motivation, learning and instruction (Roeser et al., 2002). These perceptions are associated with teachers’ beliefs about the effectiveness of

instructional strategies and inform the many decisions they make each day in the classroom. Within classroom contexts, teachers mediate many of the effects of schooling on student motivation and student outcomes (Bong, 2001). Uncovering how teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning influence their instructional practices and students' goals in the classroom is important for understanding how to create learning environments focused on mastery and understanding. Most of the previous research on this topic has investigated these relationships between teachers, classrooms and students at either the elementary, middle or college level (Deemer, 2004). Research concerned with teachers' perceptions of their students has considered teachers' beliefs about what their students need and expect from them in the classroom. Researchers have found that teachers rely particularly on their perceptions of students' needs and expectations for decision-making in the classroom and for altering their classroom behavior (Burns, 1996; Willcoxson, 1998).

Clark and Peterson (1986) indicate that the research substantiates the view of the teacher as a reflective, thoughtful individual. Moreover, the research documents that teaching is a complex and cognitively demanding process. Teachers' beliefs, knowledge, judgments, thoughts, and decisions have a profound effect on the way they teach as well as on students' learning in their classrooms. Clark and Peterson (1986) further state that thinking plays an important part in teaching. Teachers apply thinking and make decisions frequently during their teaching. In addition, teachers have theories and beliefs systems that influence their perception, plans and actions. Clark and Peterson argue that teachers' actions are directed by the beliefs and principles that they personally hold. They consider

teachers' beliefs as part of teachers' prior knowledge through which they perceive, process and act in their classrooms. They consider beliefs as the basis for teachers' practices and decision-making.

The close link between beliefs and practice is suggested by research showing that the beliefs that teachers hold about the subject matter, about learning, about students and about the classroom affect teachers' overall action and classroom instruction in particular. This finding is thoroughly demonstrated in different fields such as reading, math and science education, and ESL. Many researchers, specifically within the qualitative and constructivist paradigms, have investigated how the beliefs teachers hold about certain issues are reflected in their instructional practices (Nisbett & Rose, 1980; Shaw, 1989; Tobin, 199a, b). All research results show a close relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices. The researchers find that the teachers' classroom instruction is shaped and influenced by one's beliefs and philosophies about him or herself, about the subject matter and about the learners and the classroom.

The importance of exploring teachers' beliefs is also addressed by Pajares (1992), who asserts, "Attention to the beliefs of teachers and teacher candidates can inform educational practice in ways that prevailing research agendas cannot. The study of beliefs is critical to education." Few would argue that the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom, or that understanding the belief structures of teachers and teacher candidates is essential to improving their professional preparation and teaching practices (Pajares, 1992).

In addition, exploring teachers' beliefs is also crucial in the implementation of the

novel curriculum policy. Teachers' beliefs, thoughts, knowledge, judgments, and decisions affect how teachers perceive and think about teaching a new curriculum that they receive and to what extent they implement the training or curriculum as intended by the developers (Peterson et al., 1989). Clark and Peterson (1986) also argue that innovations that take teachers' beliefs into consideration are likely to be regarded by teachers with enthusiasm, persistence and thoroughness. Researchers also have noticed that the influence of beliefs further extends to the implementation of innovations such as novel curricula and educational policies (Cronin-Jones, 1991; Munby, 1984; Eisenhart, et al., 1988).

In summary, Johnson (1994) indicates that research findings on teachers' beliefs share three basic assumptions. First, teachers' beliefs influence both perception and judgment, which in turn affects what teachers say and do in classrooms. Second, teachers' beliefs play a critical role in how teachers learn to teach—that is, how they interpret new information about learning and teaching, and how that information is translated into classroom practices. And third, understanding teachers' beliefs is essential to improving teaching practices and professional teacher preparation programs.

#### *Contextual constraints on the real practice of teachers' beliefs*

Although much research (Pajares, 1992; Calderhead, 1996; Fang, 1996) has indicated that teachers' classroom practice is influenced by their beliefs, constraints on teachers that are inherent in the contexts in which they work can influence their beliefs and therefore impact their instructional practices and curricular decisions (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1993).

Borg (1998) cites several studies from the educational literature showing that teachers' practices are also shaped by the social, psychological and environmental realities of the school and classroom. These factors include parents, principals' requirements, the school, society, curriculum mandates, classroom and school layout, school policies, colleagues, standardized tests and the availability of resources. There is evidence to suggest that, unsurprisingly, such factors may also hinder language teachers' ability to adopt practices which reflect their beliefs.

Duffy, Roehler, and Putman (1987) helped ten teachers to make curricular and instructional decisions regarding teaching strategies to their low-achieving third-grade students. Teachers found it very difficult to make and implement instructional decisions due to the constraints placed on them by test-makers, who implicitly determined what would be taught; by curriculum developers, who defined the sequence and instructional method; and finally, by the district administrators, who expected compliance with mandates. Expectations regarding the use of the basal text were a major constraint for the teachers in this study. Teachers perceived their reality as filled with constraints that influenced their perceptions about teaching. Duffy et al. concluded that the teachers in this study felt that "their instruction is dictated by policies beyond their control" (p. 362), and that because of these constraining policies, teachers were reduced to focusing their decisions on task completion and maintaining student attention.

Similarly, Burns (1996) also emphasizes the "organizational exigencies" of the context in which the teacher works, and of the ways in which the teacher's awareness of the broader institutional context has an impact on decisions about lesson planning and

content.

Crookes & Arakaki (1999) also found strong evidence that difficult working conditions affect what language teachers do; in their study, teachers had to cope with heavy workloads (approximately 50 hours a week), which meant that time for preparation was limited. This constraint had a powerful impact on teachers' pedagogical choices.

In addition, the community where teachers work also has its influence on teachers' ability to put their beliefs into practice. Teachers' decisions about the ways they teach are also influenced by the other teachers and administrators in the professional communities in which they work. Richards and Pennington (1998), in their study of teachers in their first year of teaching in Hong Kong, found that these teachers had been trained in a version of the communicative method, yet almost without exception their practices during their first year diverged from communicative principles. Contributing factors included the impact of large classes, unmotivated students, examination pressures, a set syllabus, pressure to conform from more experienced teachers, students' limited proficiency in English, students' resistance to new ways of learning, and heavy workloads.

In a similar view, McLaughlin stresses the influence of communities in which teachers work, emphasizing that "communities which are cohesive, highly collegial environments are also settings in which teachers report a high level of innovativeness, high levels of energy and enthusiasm, and support for personal growth and learning" (p. 22).

In a word, native language instruction implementation in Taiwanese elementary schools has been going on for four years and belongs to a new language-in-education

policy; meanwhile it is also an educational reform. Trim (2000) indicates that any process of reform must take classroom realities into account (pp. 54-55). It is teachers who face the real classroom realities. Teachers are the final line of implementation of any reform attempt; so it is necessary to understand teachers' views on this new reform and how their participation will factor in its implementation.

As Vulliamy and Webb (1993) state, "The way that teachers translate new initiatives into practice are dependent upon their prior beliefs and practices" (p. 21). Woods (1994) also claims that there are specific ways in which teachers' biographies and entries into the profession might cause them to resist or appropriate particular reforms. Trim (2000) points out that even in the electronic age, a classroom still has four walls, within which a teacher interacts with students. The practice of teachers is very individual (pp. 54-55).

Since the school is the main site for native language acquisition in Taiwan, an exploration of current teachers' thoughts and views on native language instruction and education is crucial to the process of acquisition language planning for native language maintenance and revitalization. An exploration of teachers' views helps to know their beliefs, expectations, current situations, and problems in real classroom practice. Teachers who have experienced the past Mandarin Movement, especially, are currently standing on a historical point; their views might be different from those of teachers who did not experience the movement. This study attempted to address these concerns. The results of this study shed light on providing implications or insights into current language revitalization and maintenance efforts in Taiwan, and the practical implications of the results assisted plans for continuing native language education there.



## **Summary**

This chapter reviews the history of the Mandarin Movement in Taiwan as well as the influence this movement brings to native languages in this country. Reviews also include values of learning native languages, including preserving cultural heritage and identity, affirming linguistic rights, cognitive and academic benefits, improving communication between generations, and economic benefits. Further, the chapter discusses language maintenance and revitalization in the field of language planning. Finally, language maintenance/revitalization approaches in school are addressed.

### **Chapter III: Research Methodology**

In this study, a qualitative approach was used to explore teachers' views toward current native language instruction and education in elementary school in Taiwan. At the same time, the teachers' views on their past experience under the Mandarin Movement were also explored. This chapter starts with the rationale for using a qualitative approach. It is followed by a discussion of the procedures and methodologies that were followed and employed during the course of this study.

#### **Rationale for Using Qualitative Inquiry**

This research employed a qualitative approach in order to deeply explore teachers' views about native language instruction and education (as well as their views on their past experience under the Mandarin Movement). The rationale for using qualitative inquiry in this study, and the aim of the research, was to make an inquiry into "understanding and reconstructions" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 113) of native language instruction and education, seeking to identify the concerns and views of the native language teachers. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) stated, "Qualitative research is many things to many people. Its essence is twofold: a commitment to some version of the naturalistic, interpretive approach to its subject matter and an ongoing critique of the politics and methods of postpositivism (p. 10)." Also, qualitative research seek(s) "answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 10). In order to deeply explore teachers' views toward native language education regarding their past experience under the Mandarin Movement and

their current involvement in native language instruction in elementary schools, the complexity of teaching and life experience of the teachers in this study was well fitted to the field of qualitative research. Knowles et al. (1994) also stated that the recent shift to a qualitative approach to research has resulted in an increase in descriptive research that more accurately depicts the complexity of teaching and life in schools and classrooms (p. 94).

The conceptual framework that guided this study was primarily an emergent design, and it evolved over the duration this study. The conceptual framework, as Miles and Huberman (1994) indicate, “explains in narrative form . . . the main things to be studied—the key factors, concepts or variables and the presumed relationships among them (p. 18).

### **Research Paradigm**

This study fell within the interpretivist paradigm. The basic assumptions guiding the interpretivist paradigm are that knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process, and that researchers should attempt to understand the “complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). Ontologically, reality is socially constructed through human interaction; there are multiple realities. The concepts are socially constructed phenomena that mean different things to different people. As Crotty (1998) state, “Human beings construct meanings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. All objects are made and not found and they are made by the interpretive strategies we set in motion (p.47).” What is important in

the interpretative approach is how people understand their worlds and how they create and share meanings in regard to their experiences. As Rubin and Rubin (1995) note, “social research is not about categorizing and classifying; rather figuring out what events mean, how people adapt, and how they view what has happened to them and around them. It emphasizes the complexity of human life” (p. 43-45).

In the interpretivist paradigm, research involves people. There is an ongoing, reciprocal influence between the researcher and the researched. The researcher is much clearer about the fact that she/he is constructing the “reality” on the basis of the interpretations of data with the help of the participants who provided the data in the study (Eichellberger, 1989, p. 9). The inquirer is cast in the role of participant and facilitator in this process. As Guba & Lincoln (1998) indicate that the inquirer’s voice is that of the “passionate participant” actively engaged in facilitating the “multivoice” reconstruction of his or her own construction as well as those of all other participants.

In this study, the aim of inquiry was “*understanding and reconstruction* of the constructions that people (including the inquirer) initially hold”(Carr & Kemmis in Guba & Lincoln, 1998) about current native language education implementation as well as the past Mandarin Movement. The attempt was to understand situations from the point of view of teachers who experienced the situations. The researcher attempted to neutral description rather than active intervention. The codes and categories “grow out of ” or emerge from the data, rather than being determined beforehand (Sipe & Constable, 1996). The researcher and the researched were assumed to be interactively linked so that the “findings” were *literally created* as the investigation proceeded (Guba & Lincoln, 1998).

Thus, this study fitted well in the interpretivist paradigm.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Case Study Approach**

To explore the views of a selected group of native language teachers in Taiwanese elementary schools, a case study qualitative approach was employed. As Yin (2003) states, “Case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p. 1). In this study, the research questions not only focused on how these teachers perceive their past experience related to native language education, but also focused on the contemporary phenomenon of native language education within a real-life context. The case study approach as described by Yin was the most appropriate for my purpose because it enabled me to study the phenomena in depth, as it existed in its real-life context, and without imposing any controls or making any interventions that would diminish the depth and multi-dimensionality of the research. The case study method allowed me to present the “big picture” holistically, showing the complexity of each individual’s story. With the case study method, the researcher could ask open-ended “how” and “why” questions that brought us to the heart of the participant’s experience.

Merriam (1988) states that a case study is a detailed examination of a setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or a particular event. She points out, “The single most defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the

object of study, the case” (p. 27). Stake (1988) defined the case study approach as the study of “a bounded system,” an entity that has unity or totality with some kinds of outlines and boundaries. It “focuses on a bounded system whether a single actor, a single classroom, a single institution, or a single enterprise—usually under natural conditions—so as to understand it in its own habitat” (p. 265). In this study, the subjects were bounded systems in two senses: as individual native language teachers and as a group of native language teachers.

Berg (2004) states, “Case study methods involve systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how the subject operates or functions” (p. 251). Merriam (1988) also claims that a case study results in “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of the phenomenon or social unit being studied” (p. 206). This study consisted of ten descriptive, explorative case studies of the participants. Each case was presented as a portrait of each participant that explores the teacher’s background, his or her personal experiences under the past Mandarin Movement, and his/her perceptions toward current native language instruction and education. The goal of this study was to obtain a comprehensive exploration and understanding of these participants’ views; thus the design of the case study was suitable for this study.

### **Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative inquiry was also employed in this study. By means of the narrative inquiry, the actual pictures with regard to these participants’ perspectives of past and current

experiences were presented. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), “Narratives are data collectively speaking to when, how and why an event or a process occurred.” Also, according to many qualitative researchers, especially constructivists, narrative is one way of knowing similar to scientific reasoning. It is considered an expansion of interpretative research.

Coffey and Atkinson (1996) define narrative as a story or an account of a sequence of events that has meaning/significance for the narrator and the audience. Watson and Watson-Franke (1985) describe life history as any retrospective account by the individual of her/his life in whole or in part, in written or oral form that has been elicited or prompted by another person. Cole and Knowles (2001) characterize a life narrative or story as:

... a written or oral account of a life or segment of a life as told by an individual. These terms, along with others such as personal history and personal narrative, are often subsumed under the rubric of narrative or biographical method (p. 18).

As Moran (1996) points out, “Narrative” (Clandinin, 1992; Clandinin & Connelly, 1988; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) is consistent with similar concepts, such as “story” (Carter, 1993; Clandinin & Connelly, 1991), “biography” (Butt & Raymond, 1987; Goodson & Walker, 1990), and “life history” (Knowles, 1991; Woods, 1987); these approaches to research focus on the individual teacher and his or her experience, and on the critical importance of portraying this experience from the teacher’s point of view.

With a similar view, Seidman (1998) also states that stories are a way of knowing. Telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process. When people tell stories, they select details of their experience from their stream of consciousness. It is this process of

selecting constitutive details of experience, reflecting on them, giving them order, and thereby making sense of them that makes telling stories a meaning-making experience (p. 1). Every word that people use in telling their stories is a microcosm of their consciousness (Vygotsky in Seidman, 1998, p. 1). Individuals' consciousness gives access to the most complicated social and educational issues, because social and educational issues are abstractions based on the concrete experience of people (Seidman, 1998, p. 1).

For this study, narratives by teachers in the interviews represented a very powerful source of data and were important for analyzing and understanding the teachers' views. To elicit data in the form of "stories" or narratives is more important in the study of views because very often views and meanings are not entirely consciously accessible.

### **Data Collection**

Data for this qualitative study were collected from ten teachers currently involved in native language instruction in elementary schools in Taiwan. The samples were selected based on purposeful sampling. As Berg (2004) indicates, "When developing a purposive sample, researchers use their special knowledge or expertise about some group to select subjects who represent this population (p. 36). Purposeful sampling differs from conventional random sampling. Purposeful sampling is based on informational, not statistical considerations. "Its purpose is to maximize information, not to facilitate generalization. Its procedures are strikingly different, too, and depend on the particular ebb and flow of information as the study is carried out rather than on a prior considerations" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 202). Merriam (1998) also points out,



“Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned”(p. 61). The participants’ previous experience under the Mandarin Movement and current involvement in native language instruction were considered while selecting the participants in this study.

The major data collection strategies for my research involved conducting multiple, in-depth, semi-structured interviews, taking extensive, detailed field notes in which I recorded the settings of the interviews, relevant body language and other non-verbal cues displayed by the participants, along with my own impressions, insights, reactions and reflections. Also, I kept a research journal; this journal included my day-to-day research activities. It included field notes, notes following a review of interview data, a record of my decision-making processes and personal notes about participants.

Interviewing is a powerful way to gain insight into educational issues through understanding the experience of the individuals whose lives constitute education. As a method of inquiry, interviewing is most consistent with people’s ability to make meaning through language. It affirms the importance of the individual without denigrating the possibility of community and collaboration. Finally, it is deeply satisfying to researchers who are interested in others’ stories (Seidman, 1998, p. 7-8).

Semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews with each participant were conducted at least three times to investigate participants’ perceptions about native language teaching. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. Given that the purpose of this approach was to have the participants reconstruct their experience, put it

in the context of their lives, and reflect on its meaning, anything shorter than 90 minutes for each interview seems too short (Seidman, 1998, p. 14).

The interviews were audio-taped in order to enhance the accuracy of the data and to verify the impressions based on the data. The interviews were conducted in the language that the participants feel comfortable using. The researcher is fluent in both Mandarin and Hakka. The places selected for conducting the interviews were based on convenience and ease for the participants.

### **About the Native Language Instruction Program**

In 2000, the Ministry of Education mandated Main Points on the Temporary Implementation of Nine-Year Integrated Curriculum in Elementary and Junior High School. In the details about implementing native language instruction, it states “Students from first grade to sixth grade are required to select one of the three native languages (Southern Min, Hakka, or aboriginal languages) to learn the native language.” The following are the basic concepts and goals of native language curriculum that are included in Main Points of Native Language Curriculum. In addition, textbooks and details about native language sources are introduced.

#### Basic Conceptions of Native Language Curriculum

1. Cultivate students’ interest in exploration and love of Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages; meanwhile cultivate students’ habits in actively learning Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages.

2. Cultivate students' listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities in order to let them employ these four language abilities in their daily life.
3. Cultivate students' abilities in employing Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages to think, understand, infer, negotiate, discuss, appreciate, create and solve problems.
4. Cultivate students' abilities in employing Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages to learn each subject. Broaden students' living experience, expand students' learning domains and knowledge of the Chinese culture, and understand the current international trends in order to let students meet the needs of modern society.
5. Let students learn to employ reference books and information networks in order to expand students' learning aspects in Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages; meanwhile cultivate students' independent learning abilities.
6. Inspire students' extensive interest in learning; meanwhile promote students' abilities in appreciating works of literature.

#### The Goals of Native Language Curriculum

<div> <div>The goals of curriculum</div> <div>Basic competence</div> </div>	Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages curriculum
1. Self-understanding and self-potential development	Construct self-confidence as the basis of self-development by understanding the context of Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages.

2. Appreciation, expression, and innovation	Cultivate interest in Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages writing and promote abilities in appreciation.
3. Career planning and lifelong learning	Have self-learning abilities toward Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages as the basis of lifelong learning.
4. Expression, communication, and sharing	Employ Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages to express and share thoughts and opinions.
5. Respect, consideration, and teamwork	Adequately interact with people in Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages.
6. Culture learning and international understanding	Learn to know culture and customs of different ethnic groups and foreign nations by learning Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages.
7. Planning, organization and implementation	Employ Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages to plan and implement.
8. Utilization of science and technology	Fully make use of technology to preserve the forms and connotation of Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages.
9. Active exploration and research	Cultivate interest in exploring Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages; meanwhile cultivate

	active learning attitudes.
10. Independent thinking and problem-solving	Employ Southern Min/Hakka/aboriginal languages to think independently and solve problems.

### Textbooks

According to the Ministry of Education (2003), “Each elementary school can select or edit adequate native language textbooks and instructional materials based on the needs of students’ choosing languages.” Therefore, native language teachers can flexibly use the instructional materials they select and/or edit in their classroom. During the interview section, I also asked my participants about what kind of teaching materials they used in their classroom.

### Native Language Teachers’ Sources

Currently teachers who serve as native language teachers come from two different sources. One is from current elementary school teachers. According to the Ministry of Education (2000), any current elementary school teachers who are interested in teaching native languages can attend a 36-hour workshop which is focused on gaining teaching credentials in native languages. The workshop is held either by the Ministry of Education or the local city government. After attending the workshop, teachers can gain teacher certification in native languages. Thus, they can teach native languages in their schools. The other source is from the general public. Anyone who is interested in teaching native languages in elementary schools can take an examination to determine their qualifications

to teach native language. Either the Ministry of Education or the local government holds the examination. After passing the national exam and getting native language teacher certification, individuals can take the local native language teacher exams required by the elementary school, which needs native language teachers. After passing the exam, they can become involved in native language instruction in that school. This kind of teacher is called a “native language support teacher.” In 2002, the Ministry of Education held the first examination for identification of native language teaching competence of native language support teachers. In 2005, the Taipei County Government held the Hakka supporting teachers exam.

## **Participants**

In this study, I selected the participants from teachers involved in Hakka instruction in public elementary schools. The reasons for focusing on Hakka teachers were: 1) I am a native Hakka speaker. As a researcher, this was relevant—taking into account that while conducting interviews, I could have a better understanding of what the real situations were. 2) The Hakka group is more likely to belong to the minority group. According to the distribution of the population in Taiwan, the Hakka group neither belongs to the major population (like Southern Min) nor the least numerous population (aboriginal people). Also, this group does not have the complexity of the aboriginal people, which includes twelve tribes. Based on the above two reasons, I chose Hakka teachers as my focus for this study.

The participants, identified by pseudonyms, were purposefully selected based on

their past experience under the Mandarin Movement, teaching experience involving Hakka instruction, and willingness to participate in this study. The participants in this study had the following qualifications: in addition to having experienced the Mandarin Movement in the past, these teachers were also required by the study to have been involved in native language instruction for at least one year. The purpose of selecting teachers who met the above characteristics was to focus specifically on teachers' experiences relating to the transition from the experience of past language-education policy to current involvement in native language education and its after-effects in native language education.

### **Gaining access to the participants**

During the summer break of 2005, I went back to Taiwan to visit my family. On several occasions I went to Hakka language contests. These contests included Hakka speeches, dancing, songs, etc. held by the bureau of education in the local city government. According to the rules of the contest, each public elementary school in the city could send students and teachers who would like to participate. Through those activities, I got to know teachers who either sponsored their students' participation on the contest or participated in the contest themselves. I approached them and explained my study to them. Afterwards, I inquired if they could join my study. At that time, five teachers from those activities chose to join the study. When I was writing the proposal, I recruited five more participants to join this study by means of snowball sampling. According to Berg (2004), snowball sampling is sometimes the best way to locate

subjects with certain attributes or characteristics necessary in a study. Snowball samples are particularly popular among researchers interested in studying various classes of deviance, sensitive topics, or difficult-to-reach populations (p. 36). I made several overseas phone calls to the participants who had already promised to join the study to find out if they knew any other teachers who might have different views toward my research topic. Three more participants were recruited in this way. Another two participants were recruited in this study by the recommendation of friends who work in public elementary schools. These two participants were involved in Hakka instruction in those schools. I inquired about their willingness to participate in this study on the phone.

Among the ten participants, three were male and seven were female. Their age ranged from 40 to 60 years old. The participants' experience in teaching native language ranged from 1 to 4 years. Eight of the teachers were native language support teachers. Two of the teachers were current elementary school teachers who also taught Hakka in their schools. All of the ten participants had Hakka teaching certification. The elementary schools where the participants were involved in native language instruction were located in three different cities (City X, Y, and Z) in northern Taiwan. The educational background of these participants ranged from senior high school degree to master's degree. The past major subject area of these participants also varied. Table 2 is a summary of the ten teachers' profiles including gender, age, years of teaching Hakka, schools' location, numbers of schools involved in Hakka instruction, number of Hakka classes, class size in each class, and previous degree.



Table 2: Participants' profiles

Teacher	Gender	Age	Years of teaching Hakka	Number of schools involved in Hakka instruction	Number of Hakka classes	Class size in each class	School locations	Previous degree
Alan	Male	60s	3	3	9	28~35 (students)	Y	Senior high school
Betty	Female	40s	3.5	5	31	10~35	Y	Vocational high school
Charles	Male	60s	3	1	5	20~30	Y	Bachelor
Doris	Female	50s	2	2	10	12~25	X	Bachelor
Elizabeth	Female	40s	3	3	16	8~31	X	Master
Flora	Female	40s	4	2	16	15~20	X	Bachelor
Greg	Male	50s	4	1	3	3~5	X	Master
Helen	Female	40s	1	1	4	20	Z	Vocational high school
Ivy	Female	50s	4	1	1	30	X	Bachelor
Joan	Female	50s	3	1	3	27~35	X	Bachelor

### Brief description of the characteristics of Hakka culture

As the participants in this study were from a Hakka-speaking group, a brief description of the main characteristics of Hakka culture is introduced here. The general Hakka lifestyle and particular life philosophy are the two primary parts of this focus.

The traditional Hakka clothes are like the clothing of the Tang Dynasty. After emigrating from Mainland China three or four hundred years ago, Hakka people, both men and women, wore shirt-waists on the upper body, and pants on the lower body. The clothing of Hakka women was called Lan-Shan (blue shirt-waist). The color of these clothes was mainly blue or black. This type of clothing had its practical value, in that clothes in blue or black could endure the dirt and sweat. As traditionally Hakka people relied on farming, this kind of clothing effectively met their needs in their agriculture lifestyle. Hakka traditional clothing has practically passed into history after three hundred years. Nowadays, in Taiwan, with the influence of Western culture, it is rare to see Hakka women wearing this kind of traditional clothes. Lan-Shan already has become a clothing style used mainly for demonstration and performances. However, the spirit of Lan-Shan has become the representation of Hakka spirit. Lan-Shan represents the Hakka spirit of hard work, perseverance, courage and strength (Huang, 2004, p. 274-275).

Another important aspect of Hakka culture is its food. Unlike the traditional Hakka clothing which has already become obsolete, Hakka food is still kept in the Hakka villages nowadays. “Hakka delicacies” are different than other ethnic groups’ food. Because the areas where Hakka people live are mainly in the lower mountains or hills, Hakka food is centered around livestock instead of seafood. Hakka food and utensils are characterized by practical values instead of merely a sumptuous appearance.

Singing Hakka mountain songs is the traditional Hakka people’s entertainment in their agriculture lifestyle. In the earliest times, Hakka mountain songs were created when

Hakka people were working in the mountains, tea farms, and fields, and freely expressing their thoughts and feelings while they were working. Signing mountain songs depended on each individual's creativity and did not require any accompanying instruments. Later on, Hakka mountain songs were sung accompanied by a variety of instruments.

Hakka women were traditionally required to learn to be good housewives, starting from childhood. Before getting married, girls needed to learn the skills of sewing, cooking, doing the farm work and taking good care of each family member. Therefore, Hakka women were famous for their capability in taking care of such family duties. Traditionally, Hakka men mainly paid attention to earning a living. During the rainy days when Hakka men did not do the farm work, singing mountain songs and playing instruments with friends were their major activities (Huang, 2004, p. 250-251).

In the early days, Hakka people mostly relied on agriculture for a living, and as most Hakka people lived in the lower mountains or hills, they cultivated the virtues of diligence, frugality, and cherishing daily necessities. The ideal lifestyle for Hakka people in the early days consisted of farming and studying. Therefore, a famous Hakka phrase which represents Hakka life is “Chiny-geng Yu-du” (in Mandarin). That is, “Do the farm work on the sunny days, and study on the rainy days.” This phrase shows the traditional emphasis on studying in Hakka culture (Huang, 2004, p. 19-20).

## **Data Analysis**

Data analysis started as soon as data collection began, using the constant comparative method. The basic strategy of the method is to do just what its name

implies—constantly compare. The researcher began with a particular incident from interviews or field notes, and compared it with another incident in the same set of data or in another set of data. These comparisons lead to tentative categories that are then compared to each other and to other instances (Merriam, 1998, p. 159). The researcher continually and recursively reviewed and checked the data through the analysis; thus themes and a core phenomenon emerged naturally from the categories.

In addition to using the constant comparative method, two other types of analysis were also carried out in this study: individual case analysis and cross-case analysis. First, “each case is treated comprehensively in and of itself” (Merriam, 1988, p. 154). Then, the researcher analyzed data from the ten cases. The purpose was to deepen understanding and explanation, and to “build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases” (Yin, 2003, p. 108). Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that case-by-case analysis also helps the researcher to see processes and outcomes that occur across cases. According to Glasser and Stauss (1967), “comparing as many differences and similarities in the data as possible tends to force the analyst to generate categories, their properties, and their interrelations as he tries to understand his data”(p.55). In this study, cross-case analysis helped the researcher to generate categories and to see the differences and similarities among those native language teachers. It helped the researcher to find out how these ten cases are related, but did not lead the researcher to generalize from these cases to the whole population of native language teachers in Taiwan.

## **Trustworthiness**

The purpose of establishing trustworthiness is to persuade people that the findings of the inquiry are worth taking account of. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that the criteria for trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used these strategies in the findings of the study to establish trustworthiness: member-checking, peer-debriefing, purposeful sampling, and thick-description.

### **Credibility**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the term “credibility” has a twofold task: first, to carry out the inquiry in such a way that the probability that the findings will be found to be credible is enhanced and, second, to demonstrate the credibility of the findings by having them approved by the constructors of the multiple realities being studied (p. 196). In this study, credibility was achieved through criterion for narrative inquiry, peer debriefing, and member checking.

### **Peer Debriefing**

Peer debriefing is a technique to improve credibility by engaging a disinterested peer “in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). The peer reviewer can play a role in helping reveal the inquirer’s biases, meanings and bases of interpretation. In this study, the peer reviewer

was a Taiwanese doctoral student in the School of Education in the same university as the researcher. She helped in probing the researcher's biases, exploring meanings and clarifying the researcher's interpretations.

### Member Checking

Member checks are the means by which data interpretation or conclusions are tested with the primary source of data and is the "most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). According to Erlandson et al. (1993), member checking provides a chance for members of the study to indicate whether the reconstructions of the inquirer are accurate. I conducted member checks for my interpretation throughout this study. I took data and my tentative interpretations back to my participants and asked them if the results were plausible.

### **Transferability**

#### Thick Description

The element of transferability can be established by means of thick description. According to Merriam (1998), this technique can provide enough description so that readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether findings can be transferred (p. 211). Since transferability depends on similarities between contexts, the researcher collects sufficiently detailed descriptions of data in context and reports them with sufficient detail and precision to allow judgments about transferability (Erlandson et al., 1993). In this study, I provided detailed and rich

descriptions for readers who would like to transfer the findings to similar contexts.

### Purposeful Sampling

According to Merriam (1998), “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned”(p. 61). Berg (2004) also points out, “When developing a purposive sample, researchers use their special knowledge or expertise about some group to select subjects who represent this population (p. 36). In this study, purposeful sampling was used to obtain the most appropriate information for the study.

### **Dependability/Confirmability**

In this study, dependability/confirmability was achieved by the use of multiple techniques such as alternative triangulation, member-checking and peer-debriefing. The purpose of these measures was to establish the dependability/confirmability of the study to potential readers.

## **Summary**

This chapter focuses on the qualitative methodology of this research project. This was a multiple case study, an inquiry into teachers’ views about native language instruction and education in elementary school, as well as teachers’ past experience under the Mandarin Movement. The participants were ten teachers currently involved in Hakka instruction in elementary schools in northern Taiwan. This inquiry was seen through teachers’

perspectives using their own words, narratives and interpretations. The aim of the inquiry was not to generalize the findings but to understand the phenomenon in its context; to capture some of the richness and complexity of the findings and explain it in a comprehensible way. The source of data included multiple in-depth interviews with teachers and field notes. The constant comparative method, individual case analysis, and cross-case analysis were involved in the discussion of the overall findings. Strategies used to establish trustworthiness in this study include peer debriefing, member checking, thick description, and purposeful sampling.



## **Chapter IV: Participant Profiles**

In this chapter, three participants' profiles are presented. The profiles describe the stories and experiences of these participants from their past Mandarin Movement involvement up to their current involvement in Hakka teaching in elementary school. These three teachers' profiles are selected for several reasons. Firstly, these three teachers represent three different age ranges. As the participants in this study recalled their history with the Mandarin Movement, age played a role in the differences of their experiences. These three represent the older group of the study participants (Alan, over 60 years old), the middle group in terms of age (Elizabeth, in her late 40s), and the younger group (Betty, in her early 40s). In addition, Betty is the only full-time Hakka language support teacher in this study. Elizabeth represents the group of those language support teachers who have taken on Hakka teaching as well as their original role as housewives. Alan represents the group of language support teachers who are devoting their retirement to Hakka teaching.

### **Betty**

#### **The Early Years**

Betty grew up in a rural village in a remote mountain area in northern Taiwan. In Betty's childhood, the residents of her village all relied on growing fruits, vegetables, and rice. Hers was a very typical Hakka village. Almost everyone there was a Hakka speaker. Elementary school life for Betty was a time of poverty. Very often her parents had no money to pay her tuition at school. Even though the tuition was just a few hundred

Taiwanese dollars at that time, it was still a huge sum for Betty's parents. Betty recalled that at the beginning of each semester, she often felt ashamed when her teacher asked when she would be able to turn in her tuition fee. She always replied to her teacher that she had forgotten to bring the money to school, and that she would bring the tuition fee the next time. Sometimes she did not want to go to school for fear that her teacher would ask her the same question again.

At Betty's elementary school, everyone was required to speak Mandarin on the school grounds. Her classmates were mostly Hakkas who came from several nearby Hakka villages. She remembered that her teachers set rules for punishing students who spoke languages other than Mandarin at school. One of the rules that made a vivid impression was a fine of \$1 NT. Betty was even fined for accidentally speaking Hakka once after class. One of her classmates had asked her if she would like to play jump rope with the other girls. Betty quickly responded, "Ho a! Ten ngai loui thi sia tai." ("Okay! Let me finish writing this sentence.") (Betty, personal interview, May 24, 2006). However, the student discipline monitor in her class heard her words. That boy said to Betty, with a satisfied smile, "I got you! You spoke dialect. The teacher told us not to speak dialect at school. I will go tell our teacher." (Betty, personal interview, May 24, 2006). Then the boy quickly ran away. Betty recalled that she was very angry with herself. She knew the rule; she had just forgotten it for a moment. She remembered that she disliked that discipline cadre intensely. A discipline monitor was usually one of the teacher's favorites in the class. This student was responsible for watching students' behavior and manners whenever the homeroom teacher was not in the room. Therefore, this student had power

in the classroom. Betty humorously said that the discipline monitor did not usually have a good personal interaction with his classmates.

Although Betty recalled this incident in a very amusing way, she also said that it was really a bad experience, because her family was so poor that she could not afford to pay the fine. She dared not tell her father that she had been fined at school for accidentally speaking Hakka. After several days, she gathered enough courage to tell him that she needed to turn the fine in to her teacher. She remembered her father asking why she had behaved so wrongly at school. He admonished her not to make such a mistake again. He said he had no extra money to pay for these kinds of mistakes. After that experience, Betty was very careful not to break the rules about the prohibited use of Hakka at school. She remembered with irony that she was only fined once, unlike her other classmates, who were fined more often. In Betty's memory, other methods of punishment included teachers who would grasp the student's mouth, or students who were told to write out the contents of the Mandarin textbook several times. Disciplines depended on which punishment method the homeroom teacher liked to use.

In junior high school, in Betty's memory, it seemed that the situation of being punished for speaking dialects at school was not as serious as in elementary school. She remembered everyone was more accustomed to speaking Mandarin at school by that time.

### **The Original Family**

In Betty's family, everyone always spoke Hakka. Betty's parents could not speak Mandarin. Her father could speak a little Japanese since he had attended a Japanese

school for three years when the Japanese ruled Taiwan. Betty's mother had not had any formal education; she only could speak Hakka. In the early days, Betty remembered that her father sometimes complained to her mother that he was looked down on when he went to the local government office to run errands related to his farm work. Her father expressed that the staff there were "a little arrogant." If the farmers could not understand Mandarin, some of the staff would communicate impatience in their facial expressions. So, Betty remembered that in her elementary school days, her father asked her to teach him some basic conversation in Mandarin. Betty also taught her father how to write his name in Mandarin.

Betty was the oldest daughter in her family. She had eight siblings. Betty was very close to her grandmother during her childhood. In her memory, her grandmother was a kind elderly woman who would teach Betty her life philosophy by using Hakka proverbs or sayings. One Hakka proverb that greatly influenced Betty was a saying about people's appearance. She remembered her classmates always made fun of her appearance during her elementary school years. At that time, Betty was thin and a little dark compared to the other children. She was not confident about her appearance. So, she felt upset when the other kids teased her. She once told her grandmother about this. Betty said, "Grandma, what can I do? I am so ugly!" She remembered her grandmother replied to her with a smile and said, "Tshu ngin tsung yiu tshu ngin ien, mok kuai tshu ngin m tat tshien." ("People who are not good looking also have their own talents. Do not think those people have no worth."). This Hakka proverb had given Betty a lot of confidence throughout her life. She had kept it in mind, and it had great personal meaning to her. She had tried her

best to cultivate a kind heart, because she believed a person's heart was the most important thing. Betty expressed that this proverb was the most precious thing that her grandmother left her.

In Betty's memory, she was kept busy helping the family during her early days. Her family grew a wide range of crops, such as rice, sugarcane, mushrooms and vegetables. Betty was busy after school every day. In addition to helping with the farm work, she needed to help take care of her siblings, since she was the oldest child in the family. She remembered that they grew mushrooms, and that this was a really tiring period. She needed to get up as early as 3 o'clock in the morning to collect the mushrooms in the field. The reason was that the mushrooms grew quickly once they received sunlight. So, the family needed to collect the mushrooms before the sun came up. And after the work, around 7 a.m., she still needed to go to school.

After graduating from junior high, Betty did not attend senior high school. Her family could not afford the tuition for her to continue her schooling. Her parents wanted her to be a worker in the factory in the city in order to help support the family since she was the oldest child. Therefore, Betty went to work in a bamboo-sprout canning factory located in another town. The factory had a commuter bus and she commuted to the factory on weekdays. At work, Betty began to encounter people who spoke Southern Min, and it was there that she learned to speak Southern Min. In her memory, very few people at work spoke Hakka, since most of the workers were Southern Min people. Betty said that it was natural that she learned to speak Southern Min well after working with them for a long time. She remembered she usually spoke Mandarin and Southern Min at the

factory. Only on the commuting bus were there some of her neighbors who also worked in the factory. When they met on the bus, they would speak Hakka. Of course, when she returned the village at night, it was a Hakka speaking environment.

In the following years, Betty continued to work in different factories in big cities because she needed to earn money to support her family. Betty recalled she usually spoke Southern Min and Mandarin during this period. Hakka was only spoken when she got back to her hometown to visit her family on the weekends.

### **The Married Family**

Betty got married in her early thirties. Betty's husband is a Southern Min. After they got married, Betty and her husband went to another big city in the north of Taiwan. Most of the time, they communicated in Mandarin. Sometimes their languages intermingles with Southern Min. After starting her family, Betty worked at several kinds of jobs, including being a vendor in the night market, and a saleswoman for an insurance company. These varied experiences helped Betty learn how to get along with different kinds of people.

Betty recalled that she seldom encountered Hakka people who expressed their Hakka identity during those years. Everyone spoke Mandarin, which was very convenient. Southern Min was also common in daily life. For example, while shopping in the traditional market in the big city, almost everyone spoke Southern Min. Betty felt that speaking Mandarin at that time was a convenient and natural thing for everyone, and she did not feel it was wrong to do so.

Betty has two daughters. Both of them are in elementary school. Betty recalled that

she did not pay much attention to teaching her children to speak Hakka before she entered the Hakka teaching field. In the past, she conversed with her children in Mandarin. Betty recalled that she was not aware of the problem of the decline of the Hakka language. It seemed that everyone spoke Mandarin in her surrounding environment, and Betty also spoke Southern Min fluently. Betty spoke Hakka only when she had contact with her siblings and her original family. Only in these few years since she got involved in Hakka teaching had Betty begun to teach her children Hakka. Now, she said her children could understand spoken Hakka. As for speaking ability, that would still take time.

### **Being a Hakka Language Support Teacher**

After her children started kindergarten, Betty decided to study in a vocational senior high school at night. In the daytime, Betty took a job in a private kindergarten. Betty recalled that she entered the field of teaching Hakka because of a specific incident. One day around the time of her graduation from the vocational senior high school, her husband was reading the newspaper. There was a news item about an upcoming examination for Hakka language support teachers given by the Ministry of Education. Her husband suggested to Betty that she might try to take part in the exam since she was a native Hakka speaker. Betty thought it was a good idea.

So, Betty went to the bookstore to buy some books related to Hakka and began to prepare for the exam. After passing the Hakka language support teacher exam, Betty participated in the 36-hour workshop held by the Ministry of Education. Afterwards, she taught Hakka in several elementary schools. Betty felt she was lucky because she could

be a Hakka language support teacher in an elementary school after graduating from the vocational senior high school. On average, Betty taught around 30 Hakka classes in a week. During each semester, Betty taught in four, sometimes even five schools. The reason why Betty taught so many classes in a week was that she regarded it as a full-time job. Betty needed to earn money to help support her family, and she thought this Hakka teaching job was better than her previous jobs.

After becoming a Hakka language support teacher, Betty joined the National Hakka Teachers' Association. This association was mainly formed from the Hakka language support teachers who teach in this country's elementary schools. Most of them were not formal or official teachers in elementary schools. This association had held many workshops for Hakka language support teachers. In these workshops, college professors and educators were invited to teach instructional techniques for Hakka language support teachers. These courses included classroom management, principles of teaching, and teaching methodologies. Usually these workshops were held on weekends so Hakka language support teachers could participate. The intention of the Association was to help improve teachers' expertise in their Hakka teaching. Betty regularly participated in many workshops in order to improve her knowledge and expertise in teaching and interaction with elementary school students.

### **Views about Hakka Teaching**

In Betty's view, in teaching Hakka the most important thing was how to motivate the students' interest in learning this native language. In this regard, *teachers' personal attractions* were of primary importance in motivating students to come to Hakka class to



learn. In Betty's experience, students would not select the Hakka class the next semester if they felt the teacher of the Hakka class was very boring. As a matter of fact, most students actually did not really know why there was a need to study the native language in school. They told Betty that they came to Hakka classes simply because they had heard that Betty was a very interesting and nice teacher, or that Hakka classes were a lot of fun.

Betty tried her best to understand what her students were like. Betty expressed that she knew a lot about the cartoon characters the children liked most. She also understood her students' favorite TV programs or video games. This allowed Betty to have pleasant interactions with her students. Very often, in class, Betty would give examples of how to say these cartoon characters or TV programs in Hakka, to let the children learn Hakka in a natural way.

In addition, the importance of encouragement was greatly emphasized by Betty. Betty considered it was necessary to cultivate an enjoyable and comfortable learning environment for students in the classroom. She held the opinion that since currently Hakka was in the early stages of maintaining and revitalizing, students usually were afraid to speak up, thinking this language was a little difficult to learn. So, encouragement was important in the interaction with students' learning. In Betty's experience, it was necessary to concentrate on oral skills, to encourage students to speak up all the time, letting them know that they did not need to be afraid of speaking incorrectly. Betty did not place emphasis on students' needing to have correct pronunciation. She felt that the first priority was that students felt confident to speak up. As for whether students had the correct pronunciation or not, it did not matter greatly.

Betty thought that developing students' listening and speaking skills was very important for students' learning Hakka. Betty exposed her students to repetition in listening to and saying vocabulary from the textbook. In addition to repetition of the vocabulary in the textbook, Betty also often used vocabulary flash cards to help her students review certain words.

As well as oral encouragement, Betty also used the method of collecting reward stamps in order to encourage students to actively participate in the learning activities in her class. She told her students that they could have a gift if they collected ten stamps. Based on Betty's experience, children liked this method. These reward stamps were very attractive to students, who were willing to learn or show up because they were eager to get the present. The presents included toys, stationery, and lovely decorations.

Betty also employed the concept of encouragement in her evaluation of students' learning outcomes/grades. She used many different methods to help her students gain confidence and a sense of accomplishment in getting good grades. For example, for the students in lower grades, Betty used the drawing pictures method to test her students. She felt that this inspired students with confidence, and they thought the class was fun, not too hard. She explained how she did this:

Whenever I say one vocabulary word, they need to draw that thing. For example, if I say "fa" (flowers), they need to draw flowers. If I say "ha gung" (shrimp), they need to draw a shrimp. So, they need to understand what I am saying. Then they can draw it. Sometimes I draw pictures, and then let students match the correct vocabulary. These are very simple tests. I use a very simple evaluation for them, in order not to lose their learning interest. (Betty, personal interview, July 5, 2006)

Betty's assessment methods were flexible; she would try to find out what the student could do. If the student said he/she could read or sing, she encouraged that:

If the children tell me that they know nothing, I will ask them: “So, what are you able to do? Please read the vocabulary or sentences you are able to read.” Just like this (smiles). I will ask them in this way. And some kids tell me, “Teacher, I can’t read the text, but I can sing the text.” So, I allow them to sing the text. Because there are some parts of the texts that can be sung. For example, a student sings, “Sien sang tso, se pen yiu tso, dai ga an tso!” (“Good morning, teacher. Good morning, friends. Good morning, everybody.”). So, my evaluation methods are very flexible! (Betty, personal interview, July 5, 2006)

Betty spent a lot of money in buying the prizes for her students in order to encourage them. Sometimes her husband complained that she was spending too much money on buying these rewards; he felt it was not worth it. However, in Betty’s mind, she felt a sense of accomplishment when she saw her students become active participants in classroom activities. Betty thought Hakka language was unlike Southern Min, which was the majority group language, so if students could enjoy learning Hakka because of these rewards, then she felt it to be worthwhile. She saw it as a “transmitting language mission.”

Betty thought it was necessary to adopt *different teaching strategies based on different grade level students* in elementary schools. For the lower grade level students, Betty believed teachers needed to talk with them in a more childlike tone, as would their elder sister—standing in their position. She had learned that these students liked to sing and dance Hakka children’s songs. So Betty integrated these activities into her instruction. Betty said she usually “played” with her students; for example, Betty said, while listening to the music, she would encourage her students to listen to the music with their bodies.

When we were listening to the music related to the textbook, I would say, “Now, let’s shrug our shoulders.” (She shrugged her shoulder and sang at the same time.) “Ngiet kong kong” (Bright Moon). Later, I asked them to wink their eyes, first wink the right eye, and then wink the left eye; still later, I asked them to shake their heads. In other words, children are very busy while they are listening to the music. I usually

use this method to let students listen to Hakka children's songs. (Betty, personal interview, July 5, 2006)

As for the upper grade level students, in Betty's experience, they did not like to sing and dance to Hakka children's songs. They were more likely to think that such songs were childish. Therefore, Betty sometimes taught her older students folk songs in Hakka. Also, these upper grade level students liked to have contests with each other; they liked the competitive atmosphere, which they found exciting. So, Betty usually tried to let them engage in some kind of competitive game after teaching the content in the textbook. Betty explained:

They like to show what they can do. So, usually after reading the textbook, I will let them play some kind of competitive game. I will divide them into several groups, and let them have competing games. They still like to compete, like to get the scores, and then get the rewards. This is still the same. But they are older than the lower grade level students. They know more. So, I need to use different methods to engage their interest in playing the game for the review work. Or sometimes I test them on the Hakka proverbs that I have already taught them. I say the first sentence, and then let them say the second sentence. They usually find this is more interesting. (Betty, personal interview, July 5, 2006)

In addition, for the upper grade level students, Betty added more content related to Hakka culture. As students might go visit Hakka sites with their family during the weekend, Betty would tell them cultural stories related to traditional Hakka religious customs, such as stories about some of the temples. They liked to listen to this kind of material. Betty thought this not only let students develop a better understanding of Hakka culture, it also let students learn related words in Hakka. In Betty's experience, the learning willingness of these older students was more easily affected by adults, including their teachers and their parents. So, in the class, some students would show that they did not care about learning Hakka. Teachers needed to have patience towards this attitude

according to Betty. She said that sometimes she would chat with them in class. And at the same time, she also tried to let students learn some Hakka words during casual conversation. In Betty's view, to teach children in elementary school, teachers needed to know their mental condition. Different grade level students had different thoughts and mental conditions. Teachers needed to know this in order to let students enjoy the learning process.

*Employing a variety of activities* was another strategy Betty mentioned for motivating students' interest in learning this native language. In addition to teaching the content in the textbooks, singing and dancing songs in Hakka, and playing games for doing review work, Betty liked to let her students do some hands-on activities to motivate their interest in her Hakka class. Betty sometimes used handicraft activities in her class. For example, Betty let her students draw the little paper umbrella of Mei-nong. She prepared the materials for drawing the paper umbrella, and then let her students to do the activity in class. First, Betty would introduce the characteristics, culture, and history of Mei-nong, a typical Hakka town in southern Taiwan. Then, Betty would teach her students how to say the names of the related materials in Hakka. Afterwards, Betty let the students draw the little paper umbrella on their own. Betty showed me photographs of some of her students' paper umbrellas (Betty, personal interview field notes, July 5, 2006). Betty told me that her students loved this kind of activity, which not only taught Hakka vocabulary but also gave a context of Hakka culture.

In Betty's view, Hakka language instruction needed to include some kind of handicraft, which enhanced the children's enjoyment of the class. According to Betty's

experience, children liked the real objects that they made in the class, and felt a sense of accomplishment. At the same time, the children could bring their handicrafts home to show to their parents. For example, when Betty taught the 12 sheng-shiaw<sup>1</sup> in Hakka, students did paper sculpture. Each student created a paper sculpture according to his or her favorite animal in the 12 sheng-shiaw. While doing the paper sculpture, Betty taught the children the related words in Hakka. During the interview at Betty's home, she showed me pictures of her students' handicrafts (Betty, personal interview field notes, July 5, 2006). She pointed out some pictures of the paper sculptures and explained:

These are my students' paper sculptures. The paper sculpture is three-dimensional. First, I taught them how to say the names of the materials used for making the paper sculpture; for example, I took the scissors and taught the students to say it in Hakka: "tsien to" (scissors), "tsien tsii" (cut paper). Afterwards, there was time for letting students create their own favorite animals by using the paper sculpture. After they finished their paper sculpture, they also needed to learn to how to say their favorite animal's name in Hakka. In this way, students will not feel bored and they will enjoy the learning process. (Betty, personal interview, July 5, 2006)

Other handicrafts that Betty used for her instructional activities included clay making, cloth-doll making, hand-fan drawing, and stone drawing. In Betty's experience, language instruction combined with handicraft activities was really interesting for students, and was a good way to motivate students' interest in learning Hakka. Betty expressed that she spent lots of time, energy, and money in learning how to do these handicrafts. So, very often on the weekends, she would seek out people who were skilled in making these handicrafts and asked them to teach her. Though it cost Betty time, energy, and money, she sensed that students could enjoy learning Hakka because of doing these handicrafts.

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<sup>1</sup> The relation of the year of one's birth to one of the 12 animals—the mouse, the ox, the tiger, the rabbit, the dragon, the snake, the horse, the sheep, the monkey, the fowl, the dog, and the pig.

*Teaching culture* was another important aspect of Betty's instructional activities. She emphasized the importance of integrating culture into Hakka instruction. So, elements related to Hakka people's lives and customs were all included in her instructional activities. Betty expressed that she became interested in taking pictures which were related to the traditional Hakka lifestyle when she went back to visit her old Hakka hometown after she became a Hakka teacher. She showed me an album which was full pictures of the traditional Hakka life in the country. In the pictures Betty's daughter acted as a model to demonstrate various objects. For example, the broom made from straw, and the old utensils used for making "ci bi" (a traditional Hakka dessert made of sweet rice. Usually a "ci ba" is provided on special occasions such as a wedding). It was very interesting to see this. In Betty's view, these real objects of the traditional Hakka agriculture lifestyle could not be found in cities. Most of the time, children in cities could not image what country life looked like. Betty believed that her photographs were a good way to give students a better understanding of things related to Hakka culture.

Letting children do things on their own was another characteristic of Betty's instructional method which related to teaching culture. Betty explained that she sometimes brought real objects related to Hakka to her class. When I conducted an interview at her house one afternoon, She showed me the "ci ba" that she had made in her kitchen. She told me that these "ci ba" were for the students she would be teaching the next day (Betty, interview field notes, May 24, 2006). Betty brought the "ci ba" to class, and then showed her students how to eat them. She also introduced the origin of 'ci ba' to broaden her students' understanding of Hakka culture. In Betty's view, students liked this

kind of activity, which made the class more fun. Although she used personal resources to buy these materials, she thought it was worthwhile to let students know this cultural information. She remembered one time a little girl told her that now she finally realized what “ci ba” was. She told Betty that she used to think it was Southern Min people’s food.

Betty showed me the Hakka women’s clothes in her closet when I conducted the interview in her house. She told me that these Hakka women’s clothes were what she usually wore to school. Nowadays there were some stores which sold an improved variety of Hakka clothes. Betty told me that she liked to wear these clothes to school since it represented Hakka. When I conducted interviews in her home, she always wore Hakka women’s clothing<sup>2</sup>. She also entertained me by telling me that her husband once asked her not to buy any more of these kinds of clothes, since she already had so many of them. Betty said that she felt comfortable wearing these kinds of clothes after teaching Hakka in elementary schools.

In addition, employing Hakka proverbs and slang to explain particular Hakka cultural values to students was also an important part of Betty’s instructional activities. Betty used the Hakka proverbs to introduce her students to the positive aspects of Hakka culture and virtues. She showed me photographs of her classroom in one school (Betty, interview field notes, July 5, 2006). In these pictures, I saw the classroom was decorated with lots of Hakka proverbs. Betty told me that she did all of these decorations related to

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<sup>2</sup> Traditional Hakka women clothes are black or blue, without any pattern, though nowadays Hakka clothes come in a variety of colors with various patterns on them.



Hakka proverbs on her own. In her mind, these were important part of Hakka culture and it was necessary to let students know about them. She incorporated important Hakka proverbs in the classroom decoration in order that the students who came to attend her class would keep these meaningful proverbs in their minds.

To play, not to learn, was Betty's approach with her students. Betty used the word "play" instead of "learn" while interacting with her students in class. According to Betty's experience, children preferred the word "play" over "learn." Her students thought playing was fun; learning was serious and boring. So, Betty integrated into her teaching the concept of play. Her attitude was to let students learn Hakka language and culture while they were engaging in play activities in class.

Betty said that she "played" with her students very often. After teaching a few lessons from the textbook, Betty would let her students do the review by playing games. Students would get rewards after a good performance. In Betty's view, students would try their best to say the words because they wanted to get the prize. And this was an enjoyable learning process for most students:

I designed some interesting games, such as a "millionaire" game, throwing the dice, etc. Or I let them draw lots. For example, if the student draws number five, then he or she needs to walk five steps, and then see which vocabulary he or she arrives at, and then read aloud that vocabulary. (Betty, personal interview, May 27, 2006)

Betty felt her students liked to attend her class. Sometimes during the lunch break, students encountering Betty on the school grounds would ask her, "Sien sang (teacher), what are you going to teach us this afternoon?" (Betty, personal interview, July 5, 2006). Betty said that generally speaking, her students expressed their great interest in attending her class because they usually had fun in her class.

## **Feelings about Teaching Hakka**

Betty was excited to be a Hakka language support teacher in the beginning. To her, being a teacher in the schools was a good job since in Taiwanese society, most people respected teachers generally. Therefore, Betty cherished the opportunity to be a Hakka language support teacher in elementary schools. She tried hard to participate in workshops held by the association of Hakka language support teachers, to learn knowledge and teaching skills in interacting with elementary school students. She also spent time and money to learn traditional handicraft making, which she thought might motivate students' interest in learning Hakka. At the same, she also went to the library to search for information that might be useful in her Hakka teaching.

However, Betty stated that the first two years of teaching was a difficult time for her because she did not feel respected by the schools she worked for. Betty encountered many frustrations in her Hakka teaching. The difficulties that Betty encountered included problems with the classroom, classroom teachers' attitudes, the school administration's cooperation, and the timing of the class.

Betty recalled that she was frustrated about the situation of having no classroom. She related her experiences in one school. In that school, Betty's Hakka classes were originally arranged in the audio-visual classroom. One day, a teacher told Betty that he needed to use that audio-visual classroom, and asked Betty to find another classroom to teach her Hakka. So, Betty brought her students out into the school grounds. She thought that was okay for one week, and an opportunity to let students get to know the plants on the campus. Betty taught her students the names of those plants and animals in Hakka.

But the next week, when Betty went to the school to give her Hakka classes, the same situation came up again. The teacher again said he needed to use the audio-visual classroom. So, Betty again brought her students outside and taught them on the lawn. However, the third time it was raining outside. There was nothing Betty could do. She went to the administration office and asked if they could arrange another classroom for her Hakka classes. They replied that they had already arranged the audio-visual classroom for her. Maybe the teacher just temporally needed to use that classroom. They wanted Betty to wait. But the situation still continued in the following weeks. Betty continued to try to find whether any space was available to be used for her Hakka classes at that school. One day, she found there was a basement room which was empty. Although it was a little dark, Betty thought maybe it could be used for her class. She went to ask at the administrator's office if she could use the basement. They replied that she could. So, Betty began to use the basement room. One day after she had used the room several times, when Betty got there to prepare for class she found the room was full of different kinds of textbooks, spread on the tables. She didn't know what was going on. Then when she began to teach, a number of the school's teachers and administrators began to conduct some kind of evaluation of the textbooks. Betty felt very bad because the school did not take notice of her in deciding that they needed to use that classroom for conducting the evaluation of textbooks. She felt she was not respected. While she was teaching, these teachers just came in and did their work. They walked around the table to look at the textbooks. They seemed not to be aware that Betty was teaching Hakka in that classroom. Betty's students could not pay attention to Betty's teaching since there were so

many people walking in and out the classroom. Betty recalled that she felt very bad on that day.

The next week, when Betty came to the school to teach her Hakka classes, she found that the basement was full of garbage. Some students were eating their breakfast there, and others were chatting loudly. These students were responsible for cleaning that classroom. When she saw this, Betty felt really bad. She didn't see why she needed to put up with this situation whenever she came to this school to conduct Hakka classes. She asked those students to clean the classroom, and also helped them clean. At this moment, the dean of the school walked by. Betty thought she could not put up with this situation anymore. She exhorted to the dean, "It seems that your school doesn't care about students who select Hakka. I feel that your school does not respect these students. If students who select Hakka need to put up with this kind of classroom, I would rather ask them not to select Hakka." Betty recalled she burst into tears while coming up with these few sentences. The dean of studies told Betty that he would try to find another classroom for her Hakka classes. Finally, the next week, when Betty went to that school, she had a classroom for teaching Hakka. Betty said this was one school she encountered where they did not arrange a classroom for her. Betty confided that in the several schools where she worked, there were still some that didn't arrange a fixed classroom for her Hakka classes.

Another frustration that Betty felt was the arrangement of the class time. Betty was unhappy about the classes that were arranged in the morning study time and naptime, because of poor attendance rates. Many other teachers would make use of these two periods to have their students do something else, so they could not come to the Hakka

class. Betty thought this was due to the classroom teachers' unsupportive attitudes toward students' Hakka learning.

Betty said the attendance of students in the morning was about 80%, due to other student activities held at that time. For example, students who were learning to play the flute would miss class to practice for contests. Or, when mid-term or final exams were near, some students would not come because their homeroom teachers would let students stay in class to prepare for tests or complete testing worksheets. Whenever Betty saw students on school ground and asked why they had not attended her class, they usually replied that their homeroom teachers wanted them to stay in the original classroom to do something else.

Other classes also had low attendance. The classes during naptime also had poor student attendance because students were sleepy. Also, when there were upcoming school events, such as sports meetings or anniversary celebrations, some students would miss class to help prepare programs or posters. Again, the teachers would let their students make use of the Hakka class time for these activities.

Although encountering some frustrations in teaching Hakka, Betty still did not lose her enthusiasm about teaching Hakka. She expressed that she gradually learned to adjust to these difficulties. In the past, she felt very upset if the students did not select the Hakka class, or if they did not attend her Hakka class. She would wonder whether it was her fault. She thought maybe, because she did not teach well, the students didn't like to attend the Hakka class. Now, Betty expressed that she tended not to be so upset as before, because she knew there were so many factors resulting in children's not choosing to learn

Hakka. She knew that these factors were out of her control. She thought she needed to try her best to teach Hakka in elementary schools. Since the Hakka language was declining, even if children only learned a little Hakka, it was still better than nothing. Although she was “just a language support teacher,” not a formal teacher, she found values in her role since she had the chance to transmit Hakka language to children in elementary schools. Very often, when she went to teach Hakka, Betty carried lots of things in her bag, which got very heavy with all her supplies, but when she thought about a child’s lovely face, and that they could learn a little Hakka, Betty felt wonderful. The bag did not feel so heavy. This job of transmitting her native language of Hakka was very meaningful to Betty.

### **Feelings about the Mandarin Movement**

Betty thought the Mandarin Movement of the past was understandable. In her view, it was a strategy that the government used to rule the people. She believed the Mandarin Movement had its positive aspect. Mandarin became a useful communication tool for different ethnic groups on this island. And this resulted in economic prosperity. Betty felt it was not necessary to blame the KMT for its policy in the Mandarin Movement in the past. She believed everyone needed to forget the past and move on. If people seriously blame history, then it is not good for the union of different ethnic groups on the island.

## **Elizabeth**

### **The Early Years**

The hometown where Elizabeth grew up is a Hakka village in central Taiwan.

Elizabeth's family was a typical Hakka family. In the early 1930s, Elizabeth's grandfather and his other brothers came from northern Taiwan to central Taiwan in order to settle there. They brought lots of money and bought much land. So, Elizabeth's grandfather owned a lot of land in the surrounding areas and many local farmers worked for him. The residents of the Hakka village where Elizabeth grew up are all Elizabeth's relatives. The residents there mainly relied on growing rice, sugarcane, and vegetables. Next to this Hakka village, there was a village where Southern Min people lived.

In Elizabeth's memory, her father was a typical Hakka man. When not working in the field, he liked to sing Hakka mountain songs, and played several instruments when he had some leisure time. Her mother was a woman who was very capable. Elizabeth stated that her mother was a typical Hakka woman. That is, she could do many things. Her mother always kept the kitchen clean. Elizabeth remembered her mother being very busy in doing many things. In addition to helping with the farm work, she prepared the meals, took care of her children, and cared for her parents-in-law.

Elizabeth said she performed well in her elementary school studies, often participating in Mandarin speech contests. She remembered that the contest topics included how to protect secrets and keep Communist spies from the surrounding environment. Usually, before a contest, her homeroom teacher would write the speech draft for her, which Elizabeth would then memorize. The teacher would instruct Elizabeth on how to match her physical and facial expressions to the speech drafts. Looking at the process from her current perspective, Elizabeth categorized those experiences as being a little comic. However, she was very proud to participate in the Mandarin speech contests

during her elementary school years. She thought it showed that students who were selected were very smart and were proficient in speaking Mandarin. She recalled, “Speaking Mandarin well meant a higher class; it also meant that you were very smart” (Elizabeth, personal interview, May 24, 2006).

After school, Elizabeth sometimes went to another village to play at her classmates’ and friends’ homes. At that time, she began to learn some Southern Min. Her playmates included Mainlanders and Southern Min children. While hanging out with them, she usually communicated in Mandarin. She was not aware of her playmates’ ethnic backgrounds, because everyone always spoke Mandarin. Elizabeth said she was a person who easily made friends with others. Partly due to her good performance at school, her classmates liked to be friends with her.

For Elizabeth, it was a very obvious distinction that once she entered the school grounds, she spoke only Mandarin. At home, after school, she spoke only Hakka. For Elizabeth, Hakka was a home-use language, not a school-use language. She automatically spoke Mandarin at school because she was a good student. Good students needed to follow the rules set by the school; only bad students who did not follow the rules would speak other languages at school. That is why, Elizabeth remembered, she never made the mistake of speaking Hakka at school, and never encountered any related punishment.

Elizabeth recalled that restrictions on speaking only Mandarin at school were stricter during her lower grade years. Punishments included students being fined money and having to copy and recopy the textbook. Elizabeth remembered that after her fourth grade year, the rules were relaxed. However, because she had gotten used to speaking Mandarin



at school, she never spoke Hakka there.

After graduating from elementary school, Elizabeth attended a junior high school in town, which required a 20-minute bus ride. Students came from the town itself and the surrounding villages. At that time, Elizabeth was busy preparing for the entrance exam for senior high school. She did not even know if there was a Hakka classmate in her class. The only thing she remembered from those days was that she was busy with her studies. She said that her only goal at that time was to enter the most popular and famous senior high school. In junior high school, everyone was more used to speaking Mandarin at school. She remembered it seemed natural and normal that everyone spoke only Mandarin at school. Elizabeth recalled that it did not matter which ethnic group you were in at that time. It seemed that everyone did not pay much attention to that. The most important thing was to have good grades and performance in studies. If a student had good grades, everyone wanted to be friends with him or her. One interesting thing that Elizabeth mentioned was that recently she went to participate in the reunion of her junior high school classmates. Her classmates only then realized that she could speak Hakka. They were very surprised that Elizabeth was a Hakka. Elizabeth said that she now also knew that a few of her classmates in junior high were Hakka people. Elizabeth thought this was due to the government's policy in the native language program in elementary schools, which had helped awaken many people's awareness of their own mother tongues.

### **The College Years**

After graduating from junior high school, Elizabeth went to a bigger city to attend a

junior college there. She still took the bus to school. The difference was that the time for commuting to the college was longer, about one hour. Elizabeth came back home at night. It was natural for her that she automatically spoke Hakka once she came back to the village. She said that she was used to this language change situation. That is, once she left the village, she only used Mandarin to communicate with any people whom she encountered. And once she came back to the village, she automatically used her Hakka.

Elizabeth was not aware of her Hakka identity at all in those days. She also did not pay attention to whether there were any Hakka people in her class or not. She never spoke Hakka outside her home and her Hakka village. When with classmates or friends, everyone just spoke Mandarin. Elizabeth recalled that her classmates did not even know she was Hakka since she could also speak Southern Min so well.

### **The Married Family**

Elizabeth took a secretarial job in a private company in the same city after graduating from junior college. During that time, she traveled home every night, commuting by bus to the company. At work, Elizabeth usually spoke Mandarin. She sometimes also spoke Southern Min since some of her colleagues would communicate with her in Southern Min. Sometimes she would hang out with them. She got married after working there for three years, and went on to have a family with her husband and move to another big city.

Her husband was Southern Min. They communicated in Mandarin, sometimes in Southern Min. They lived with their parents-in-law. Elizabeth became aware that the opportunities for speaking Hakka lessened after she got married. She found that she only

spoke Hakka while talking on the phone with her original family members, or when she went back to her hometown to visit her family. Overall, her husband's family members were (and are) nice to her, except her sister-in-law. Her sister-in-law sometimes would call Elizabeth "that Hakka woman" (in Southern Min). Elizabeth felt uncomfortable about hearing this. However, Elizabeth thought there was no need to be concerned about this matter even though it made her feel uncomfortable.

Elizabeth's mother told her many things about how to be a daughter-in-law before she got married. For example, a Hakka woman needed to get up early in the morning, and then she needed to prepare the breakfast for the whole family before they arise. So, after she got married, Elizabeth got up at 5:00 a.m. and began to busy herself in the kitchen. Her mother-in-law asked her why she got up so early. She replied that a Hakka daughter-in-law usually got up early. After hearing that, her mother-in-law told her that she didn't need to get up so early. She could sleep for a while. Because now she was in a Southern Min family, not a Hakka family. She also remembered the first Chinese New Year after she got married. Her mother-in-law asked her how their Hakka family celebrated the Chinese New Year. She gradually became aware of her Hakka identity. Her mother even called on the phone before the first Chinese New Year when she was with her husband's family. Her mother told her not to forget to save some food for the family. It was a Hakka custom. That is, Hakka people usually saved some food on the Chinese New Year's Eve. It meant that they would have enough food for the coming year.

Elizabeth became a full-time housewife when she got married. After her children were born, she took care of them at home. As her children grew up, she thought maybe

she could do something else. Since she had been a good student in her early years, she thought maybe she could go back to school to study. A few years ago, with her husband's support, she entered graduate school to major in Chinese literature.

Elizabeth has one son and one daughter. Her son is in college now. Her daughter is in senior high school. When her children were little, Elizabeth did not pay much attention to teaching them Hakka. She said that she did try a little to teach her kids Hakka, but they didn't like it. So, eventually, she didn't ask her children to speak Hakka. At home, they usually communicated in Mandarin. Elizabeth deeply regretted that she didn't teach her children Hakka when they were little. When asked why she didn't teach her children Hakka, Elizabeth responded:

I think I was too careless before. I talked with my kids in Mandarin all the time. I wasn't aware of the importance of my own language. I just thought Hakka was not so important to use. (Elizabeth, personal interview, May 31, 2006)

Elizabeth's father once complained that she didn't teach her children Hakka, since her siblings' children could speak Hakka, and sometimes it was not easy to communicate with her children when they got back to the village to visit the original family on holidays. In talking about this, Elizabeth expressed that she had regrets about this. Some of her siblings' children lived in the Hakka village. At that time, Elizabeth thought that they could speak Hakka because they lived in the country, not in the city. The environment was different. In the city, very few people speak Hakka, and it seemed not so useful to be able to speak Hakka. So, Elizabeth did not pay much attention to teaching her children Hakka at that time.

## **Being a Hakka Language Support Teacher**

While Elizabeth was in the third year in her graduate school, she accidentally learned there was an exam for language support teachers. That was because one of her best friends was a person of aboriginal descent. She told Elizabeth that she would like to take the exam to qualify to be an aboriginal language support teacher in elementary school. Her friend told her that she was interested in native language. Also she thought it would be fun. After hearing what her friend said, Elizabeth thought, “Since I am a Hakka, maybe I can take the Hakka language support teacher exam.” So, both of them attended the courses which introduced the native languages in the extension department of their school. Elizabeth began to have some kind of understanding about the Hakka language. She said that she just thought Hakka was a home-use language before she took the course. After that, she took the exam for Hakka language support teachers and passed it. After passing the exam, she participated in the 36-hour workshop for Hakka language support teachers. Then, she began to teach in several schools.

While she taught Hakka in several elementary schools, Elizabeth was also a volunteer in two elementary schools. Since her children were grown up, she thought that she would like to do things that she enjoyed. She thought teaching Hakka in elementary schools was really meaningful. Elizabeth then became aware that the Hakka language seemed to be facing a serious problem of decline. Before that time, she was not aware of the situation at all. Elizabeth began to teach her children a little bit of Hakka language after she got involved in Hakka instruction in elementary schools. The reason why she taught Hakka part-time was not to earn money to support the family. She did this job for

her own interest. Her husband's salary was enough to support the whole family. After becoming a Hakka language support teacher, Elizabeth also joined the national Hakka Language Support Teachers' Association to improve her expertise in teaching Hakka.

### **Views about Hakka Teaching**

Elizabeth thought that Hakka classes actually were not attractive to students. It was not a useful language for most students, unlike Southern Min, Mandarin, and English. Therefore, Elizabeth thought that Hakka teachers first needed to play an important role in attracting students to learn this native language. So, she believed *teachers' personal attraction* was very important in attracting students to register for Hakka class. It was necessary first for the potential students to be interested in the teacher, and then they would be interested in learning this native language. Actually, in her view, elementary school students did not really understand the need to learn the native language at school. Their interest in learning came because they liked the teacher. In the transmission of this minority language, the role of teachers was very important. Elizabeth put a great emphasis on the personal attraction of Hakka teachers.

Elizabeth emphasized the importance of being a modern Hakka teacher. In Elizabeth's view, the past impression of the Hakka people was the stereotype of poverty – definitely not fashionable. She believed Hakka teachers needed to dispel this stereotype and let students feel that Hakka teachers were very fashionable, humorous, and thoughtful. So, Elizabeth chose to dress in more fashionable way when she went to teach Hakka. In her experience, children liked to see the teacher was very modern and bright.

As well as style of dress, the materials used in class also needed to be attractive to

students. Therefore, Elizabeth also spent time in thinking about how to create materials for use in the classroom that students would find attractive. Elizabeth showed me a lovely baton that she used in her class. It is made of colorful feathers, and decorated with a cartoon character. Elizabeth would use this in her teaching, to demonstrate how to pronounce words or sentences. Elizabeth said that her students liked this. Whenever she asked the class if anyone wanted to demonstrate how to read certain vocabulary or sentences in Hakka, her students would readily volunteer. This was because the students liked to imitate Elizabeth the teacher, and demonstrated to the class how to pronounce the words.

Elizabeth also showed me a can used for drawing lots. A cute handkerchief covered this small can. Elizabeth told me the handkerchief was one her son used when he was little. One time, her students asked about this and Elizabeth told them the story. When the students learned that Elizabeth's son was already in his 20s, they felt very surprised. They also felt surprised that an old handkerchief could make the small can look so beautiful. Elizabeth made good use of old clothes for things like this. She considered one worthy Hakka virtue to be fragility. She emphasized letting her students become aware of this from the things she used, and from her behaviors and thinking. She reasoned that students could learn this quality from herself and from her teaching materials. Elizabeth said her students were always curious about her things. Sometimes when Elizabeth came to the classroom before the bell rings, some of her students were already there, and would ask about what they would learn in the class. Elizabeth said that her students liked her very much, so most of them were motivated to learn Hakka.

In addition, she thought it was necessary to care about her students' family lives. Elizabeth expressed that if she knew a student was from a single-parent family, she would pay more attention to that student. Elizabeth remembered there was a student who liked her Hakka class very much. But at the end of that semester, that child did not get a prize from Elizabeth's class. He felt very sad, and cried after he got back to his homeroom. Later the student's homeroom teacher told Elizabeth about this. Elizabeth was very surprised. So, at the beginning of the next semester, Elizabeth made use of an opportunity to give that student a little gift to encourage him. He was very happy. In Elizabeth's experience, students at elementary school were just children. They liked to learn things just because they liked the teacher. Actually they did not really know the importance of learning Hakka; they did not really understand why they needed to learn the native language. As a Hakka teacher, Elizabeth thought the teacher's personal attraction was very important to motivate students to come to Hakka class. Elizabeth was glad whenever students selected Hakka class because they had heard that she was a very nice and attractive teacher.

In Elizabeth's view, in teaching elementary school students the Hakka language, the first thing to be emphasized was *cultivating students' listening and speaking abilities* in Hakka. Since Hakka class was limited to 40 minutes each week, teachers had better figure out how to cultivate an environment that let students become familiar with Hakka in this short time. In addition to having students repeat saying and listening to the vocabulary and sentences in the textbook, Elizabeth thought using common words and commands in Hakka while interacting with students is necessary.



The common classroom commands, including the greeting and classroom rules, were all in Hakka. At first, according to Elizabeth, students were not used to these Hakka words. However, after a period of time, students learned to speak and understand. It just took time to let students become familiar with these words. Elizabeth remembered one time when the class was dismissed and she was going to leave the classroom, one of her students said to her, “Zang loi liau” (Welcome to come again, goodbye!). Another student who didn’t attend Elizabeth’s Hakka class was walking by, and was very curious. He asked what the boy had said. Elizabeth explained to him it meant goodbye in Hakka.

Elizabeth trained her students to listen to her classroom commands. Sometimes Elizabeth had her students do activities that were used for reviewing vocabulary or sentences. Elizabeth would have prepared flash cards of the vocabulary words. While doing review activities, Elizabeth asked her students to listen to her commands in Hakka. According to Elizabeth’s experience, gradually her students learned to be familiar with these commands, and their listening abilities were also improved. Elizabeth gave an example of how she did this:

I let my students do lots of activities. Students who demonstrated in front of the whole class needed to do the actions based on my commands. Usually, for actions that were very simple, I spoke in Hakka. When commands were more difficult for them, then I spoke in Mandarin. Sometimes I said, “na go dou” (“lift the card higher”), or “piong ha loi, pion to du sii” (“put it down, put it over your stomach”). Since the students needed to do these actions, first they needed to understand what I was talking about. I would say to a student, for example, “Ho, pung e, ki hi lo” (“Good! Bees, stand up.”). Then this student who represented the bee needed to do the action according to my commands. (Elizabeth, personal interview, May 24, 2006)

In Elizabeth’s class, her students learned to pronounce their own names in Hakka. Elizabeth gave her students their Hakka names at the beginning of each semester, and

asked them to use their names in Hakka during her class. In each class, Elizabeth would call upon the students using their Hakka names in order to let them get used to the names. Also, Elizabeth thought this could help develop students' listening abilities. Elizabeth was very proud that her students all could know their own Hakka names by the end of the semester. Some students could even say other students' Hakka names. Elizabeth recalled:

Almost all my students know their own names in Hakka. They are also able to recall other people's names in Hakka. For example, I will ask, "Who is talking now? I hear there is some noise." Then, someone will say, "It's xxx (in Hakka), he is always talking!" So, they not only can say their own names in Hakka, they also can remember their classmates' names in Hakka! (Elizabeth, personal interview, May 31, 2006)

Elizabeth also thought *encouragement* was very important in teaching students the Hakka language. She used oral encouragement when it came to students' speech and told her students it was okay to speak incorrectly. She wanted the students not to be afraid to speak up. Elizabeth also thought that patience was vital when interacting with students since most of the time students thought Hakka was difficult to learn. Elizabeth usually pointed out to students some sounds Hakka shared with other languages (e.g., Southern Min and Mandarin) which students were more familiar with. Then, students were more willing to try to speak up. As well as using oral encouragement, Elizabeth also gave her students rewards for actively speaking up or participating in the classroom activities. These rewards included stationery, little toys, and small dolls. Elizabeth believed that children liked the teacher giving them things and that they exhibited more willingness to try to participate in the classroom activities as a result. Elizabeth told me that as a matter of fact, being a Hakka teacher, compared to being a teacher of the other subjects the children studied, requires devoting more time and energy in thinking about how to attract

students to come to classes to learn.

In addition to teaching the content of the textbook, Elizabeth considered *employing a variety of activities* to be necessary in Hakka classes. Game-playing, and singing and dancing with the Hakka children's songs were common methods that Elizabeth used to make her Hakka class interesting and fun for her students. She used these methods to motivate her students' learning interest. After teaching the vocabulary in the textbook, Elizabeth let her students play various games in order to get them to practice using the vocabulary. According to Elizabeth's experience, her students paid attention to how to speak and understand the Hakka words in order to participate in the play. Elizabeth considered this to be a very good way to help students become familiar with the vocabulary. Elizabeth gave an example:

For example, I let students play the game of Luo-bo Duen. There are usually about 30 students in a class. I select a few students and get them to come before the whole class. One person takes this (one picture card); another person takes another picture card. Then, begin to play. One person says, "pu-to tsho, pu-to tsho, pu-to tsho ho, yong yak e tsho" (grape sits, grape sits, grape sits well, butterfly sits) and points to another student. This student takes the picture of "yong yak e" (butterfly) and says, "yong yak e tsho, yong yak e tsho, yong yak e ho, pung-e tsho" (butterfly sits, butterfly sits, butterfly sits well, bee sits), just like this. Let them play. Let them constantly challenge each other. I feel the effect is really good when they are challenging each other. Because they need to constantly say these few words. As well as the specific vocabulary, words like "tsho" (sit) and "tsho ho" (sit well) are also constantly spoken. So, during this process, they are becoming familiar with these vocabulary words and phrases. (Elizabeth, personal interview, June 7, 2006)

In Elizabeth's view, integrating the learning content in the game-play was a very good way to let students have fun and feel interest in the class. Also, Elizabeth stressed that the content of the games needed to be varied, because students would easily get bored with the same activity. Elizabeth gave another example:

In the game of guessing, one person says “gie e” (chicken), and then the other person needs to act like a chicken. One person says “zu e” (pigs), and then some children respond very quickly. Straight away they push in their nose; that means “pig.” Very funny! So, it’s very funny when they are playing this game. They need to use any related action to become one of the 12 animals. This can add some interesting things in their learning. For example, one person says, “pung e” (bees), and another student quickly performs the action of the bee busy flying in the flowers. Or let them play the game of “you act, I guess.” It’s also very fun! I can feel the whole class is full of excitement and enjoyment and very bright! But I also remind them, “If you answer in Mandarin, that’s not correct. So no score!” So, students need to answer the question in Hakka. Say it in Hakka, and then get the score! I just want them to practice speaking Hakka. This is also a very entertaining way to review the vocabulary. But I need to change to different activities after several times because the students will get bored if it is always the same game every time. (Elizabeth, personal interview, June 7, 2006)

Elizabeth thought employing a variety of interesting activities was really necessary in the Hakka class. Hakka teachers needed to try to figure out how to let students have fun in class, and at the same time, also let students learn Hakka through activities in the short 40 minutes of class time. If this were done successfully, students would look forward to attending the Hakka class.

In addition to games, singing and dancing with Hakka children’s songs was also a common activity in Elizabeth’s Hakka class. Elizabeth explained that she usually had students sing and do some related physical actions at the same time. For each Hakka song, Elizabeth usually thought about how to match certain physical actions to the words of the song. While talking about this, Elizabeth showed me a big mirror in her living room, where she would practice the dance for these Hakka songs. Usually before teaching children the songs, she would spend lots of time practicing dancing in front of this big mirror. She loved to do this although it took her lots of time. Sometimes her daughter and son also accompanied Elizabeth in doing this. They sometimes liked to give Elizabeth

suggestions about which action was better. Elizabeth laughingly said that this had become a kind of family activity. Her children had also learned to say some Hakka words.

Elizabeth believed students could learn to speak certain Hakka words by means of singing these Hakka songs. In addition to Hakka children's songs, Elizabeth also liked to teach her students to sing some folk songs in Hakka. In these songs, children not only learned to speak some Hakka words but also learned some particular Hakka values and virtues. For Elizabeth, integrating Hakka spirits in her teaching was very important. In Elizabeth's view, Hakka spirits represented good characteristics of the Hakka people. Elizabeth tried to integrate this into her teaching. In her view, teaching songs in Hakka was a good way to let the students know Hakka spirits. Usually she would explain the meaning of the song in Mandarin first. Then she would teach her students how to sing it. Elizabeth expressed that her students liked to sing these songs which were related to Hakka spirits.

### **Feelings about Teaching Hakka**

At first Elizabeth had lots of passion for Hakka teaching. Then she experienced a period of frustration. She felt it was difficult to stay in this field. There was a time when she felt frustrated about this. She thought maybe she would just stop teaching Hakka in elementary schools. She found that this job was not comfortable. However, afterwards, she restored her enthusiasm about teaching Hakka in elementary schools. Now, Elizabeth was confident in her Hakka teaching. She felt that she knew Hakka better after being involved in the teaching; at the same time, she was very proud of being a Hakka.

In the first year when Elizabeth became involved in Hakka instruction, she

experienced a period of frustration. That was two years ago. She said that the main reason was that, towards the end of her first semester of teaching Hakka, she asked her students whether they had selected Hakka for the next semester. Some of her students told her that they would not select Hakka for the next semester. Elizabeth asked them about the reasons. They replied it was because their parents didn't want them to learn Hakka. Even though the students themselves wanted to select Hakka for the next semester, their parents thought that Hakka was not useful in society, that Hakka was a language which few people spoke in society. It was useless to learn a language which had very few advantages. Their parents would prefer their children to select Southern Min for the next semester. After all, Southern Min was more useful in this society. And it was the language that the majority of people speak. As for English, needless to say, it was necessary to learn. This was what the parents told their children. These students' parents included both Hakka and non-Hakka people. After hearing what the students said, Elizabeth felt very frustrated.

Another frustration arose when, at the beginning of the next semester, she found that some students didn't come to class. So, she went to ask these students' homeroom teachers, who told her that these children's parents didn't want them to learn Hakka. The reason was that the children needed to go to another classroom to attend the Hakka class. Their parents thought it was dangerous for the children in lower grades to go to another class. The parents thought it was safer for their children to just stay in the original classroom. So, these parents wanted their children to stay in the original classroom to learn Southern Min. Usually, Southern Min was taught by the homeroom teacher. Parents

thought it was better for their children to stay with the homeroom teacher. According to them, the homeroom teacher could take better care of the children. Elizabeth recalled that she felt disappointed during that time. She spent so much time and money in preparing the teaching materials for this class. Before going to each class, she devoted herself to preparing the teaching materials. But it seemed that she could not feel feedback from the students or support from the parents.

Another frustration came from the school itself. Elizabeth said that the environment for implementing the Hakka language program was not good at first. She recalled that in her first year of teaching Hakka, some of her classes in some schools were arranged in the morning time slot. To try to teach at that time was really problematic. She recalled that she needed to get to the school by 7:30 a.m. and usually there were some students who would arrive late in the classroom, since it was first thing in the morning. She said that she needed to wait about 10 minutes for the late students to come to class. But the time for the class was only 40 minutes. Also, some of the students still felt sleepy during that time. And sometimes when she was teaching, there would be noise outside the classroom. It was the ceremony for hoisting the national flag. Students were singing the anthem. It really affected her mood for teaching. Also, students in her classroom didn't pay attention to what she was saying. Some students were talkative in class. Sometimes Elizabeth was quite upset about the students' bad behavior. Elizabeth recalled that the wages for one class were only \$260 NT. It was very little for her. But the language support teachers needed to have a great mission to transmit the Hakka language to the children. She felt it was a hard mission, very powerless. Elizabeth thought this Hakka

teaching job was really difficult. So, she thought about quitting the job in her first year in Hakka teaching.

Later, Elizabeth participated in workshops held for Hakka language support teachers. In those workshops, she felt touched by some Hakka language support teachers who were over 60 years old; some were even over 70 years old. She said that those elderly teachers were full of great passion for teaching Hakka to children, even though they were so old. They tried their best to learn how to dance based on the Hakka children's songs. They had great enthusiasm about teaching Hakka. Elizabeth felt very touched when she heard these old people's stories.

During those days, some of Elizabeth's friends encouraged her to keep teaching Hakka. They pointed out that Elizabeth had very good traits for Hakka language teaching. They observed that Elizabeth could speak Hakka in two accents, Si-hsien and Hai-lu. It was not easy to find this kind of person now. She was not as old as those teachers over 60. And she was not as young as the young teachers who were under 40. In general these young teachers could not speak Hakka fluently and correctly. Elizabeth's age spanned these two kinds of people. The mission of transmission of Hakka language to the children depended on people in Elizabeth's age group. In addition, she was an active and outgoing person. She could dance and sing. Her friends pointed out that she had so many valuable traits. Why did she want to leave this field? Her friends encouraged her to keep teaching Hakka. She thought that what her friends said made sense. Finally, she made up her mind that she needed to devote herself to teaching Hakka even though it was so hard. The wages were low. She did not have high expectations for effect. But she thought that she



would just try her best to teach children Hakka. She had a mission to pass Hakka language to the children. Therefore, Elizabeth began adjusting her attitude toward this transmitting language job. She asked for the classroom teachers' opinions about how to deal with some ill-behaved students. Also, she actively engaged in learning classroom management skills from the workshops held by the Hakka Language Support Teachers' Association. In addition, she constantly looked for information related to Hakka teaching from the Internet and library in order to find interesting ways to motivate her students' learning interest in learning.

Gradually, the student numbers of her classes increased. Elizabeth felt more confident about her teaching. She felt that she was making an important contribution to the transmission of the Hakka language to the next generation. Now, Elizabeth said that she felt respected by the teachers and administrators in the schools that she worked for. This was demonstrated when she was invited to participate in the textbook selection process. Usually the language support teacher was not invited to select textbooks. Elizabeth said that now she liked teaching Hakka more and more. She had realized that her native Hakka language full of rich culture, music, and language, was so precious and pretty. She was very proud of being a Hakka person.

### **Feelings about the Mandarin Movement**

For Elizabeth, the Mandarin Movement experience was not a bad one. She stated that her family members knew how to get along well with other people. Elizabeth thought this was because of her family's background influence. Her family owned a lot of land in the country. Also, her family members could use languages very well. When entering a

Southern Min village, they knew they needed to speak Southern Min. When entering the school, they automatically spoke Mandarin. So, Elizabeth said that she and her siblings did not experience any punishment for speaking Hakka at school. She said that her family members were all very smart. They knew they needed to follow the rules. Since the school set up rules to prohibit speaking other languages instead of Mandarin, she and her siblings all knew they needed to follow the rules, not break them.

In Elizabeth's view, the older people who are now over 50 might have had stricter experiences with being punished because of speaking other languages at school. Elizabeth thought she was lucky that she did not have serious punishments related to the Mandarin Movement at school. She remembered hearing her classmates in junior college talk about their experiences with being punished for speaking dialects at school. She recalled that those classmates came from the south of Taiwan and were Southern Min people. She thought they experienced more serious punishment. She remembered they mentioned that, among other punishments, they had to clean the school restroom.

Regardless of her personal experiences with using Hakka and Mandarin in the past, Elizabeth had her own thoughts about the Mandarin Movement. Although she did not personally experience punishment for not speaking Mandarin at school, Elizabeth thought that the Mandarin Movement was too harsh in some respects. The Mandarin Movement was so successful that she was not even aware of it. She said that she was not aware that her own mother tongue was declining before she entered into the field of teaching Hakka. She did not even teach her own children to speak Hakka while they were little, evidence that the Mandarin Movement was successful. She only knew that after leaving her

hometown, her chance of speaking Hakka was limited to her original family. Elizabeth thought, if the KMT government at that time was based on the assumption that learning Mandarin as a common communicative tool was better, then the native languages on this island could not be declining so seriously.

## **Alan**

### **The Early Years**

Alan grew up in a small Hakka village in north Taiwan. He came from a typical Hakka farmer's family and had six siblings. Their family grew tea, pears, and rice. He needed to help in the farm work from the time that he was little. Alan said that was very normal, as every child needed to help the family with farm work at that time. At home, everyone spoke Hakka. In Alan's memory, there were seldom guests who were Southern Min people or Mainlanders who came to visit their house. His was an environment full of Hakka people.

In his elementary school, students were prohibited from speaking Hakka on campus, even though most of them were Hakka. Alan was often punished because of incidents in which he spoke Hakka at school. He recalled that he sometimes spoke Hakka secretly with some of his good friends when they played together in the schoolyard. When this behavior was discovered by his teacher, Alan was made to stand in front of his classmates as punishment. Sometimes his hands were beaten with a bamboo stick. He also remembered other negative consequences, such as repeating several times, "I have to speak Mandarin," or "I don't speak the dialect anymore." Another punishment was to

write the sentence “I have to speak in Mandarin” a hundred times on his paper. According to Alan, the methods for punishing students who spoke dialects at school depended on the teacher’s personality. Some teachers were strict; others were not. Alan remembered that teachers would usually figure out many methods to punish students who spoke in dialects at school. Alan gradually learned not to speak Hakka at school when he was in the upper grade levels, because at that age he felt more embarrassed about being punished before his peers. Alan said he did not have any particular feelings when he was punished for speaking Hakka words; he just accepted it. He thought it was natural to be punished because he did not follow the school’s rules.

Alan remembered some students, called the disciplinary patrol, who surveyed the campus during break time. These patrols were dressed like scouts. If they heard someone speaking in a dialect, they would write down that student’s name on a list<sup>3</sup> and turn it in to the school discipline office. If many students in a class were caught speaking dialects at school, the homeroom teacher of that class would feel that he or she had lost face. Alan recalled that because these teachers were afraid that their own students would be caught, they tried hard to get their students to follow the rules. Superintendents also came to school from time to time, to advocate Mandarin-speaking behaviors.

Alan recalled that the slogans about speaking Mandarin were not so obvious after he started attending junior high school. The reason was that by that time everyone was used to speaking Mandarin all the time. Therefore, Alan recalled that he spoke Mandarin all the time when he was in junior high and senior high school.

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<sup>3</sup> Students all wore uniforms. Every student’s name, grade level, and classroom were on the uniform.

## Workplaces

Alan recalled he became aware of his Hakka identity in his first workplace. Although Alan went to another city for senior high school, that school was located in a Hakka-speaking district. The students there were mostly Hakka people. And in the military, Alan spoke Mandarin all the time because that was the rule. Therefore, Alan first felt his Hakka identity in his first job in a textile factory in a big city.

It was in the 1970s. Alan remembered he would like to talk in Hakka with his friends who also came from his hometown. But he encountered some trouble about this. In his workplace, Alan remembered, some people of the majority group (Southern Min) asked Alan to speak Southern Min. The reason was that they could not understand Hakka. Alan recalls,

If I spoke Hakka, there would be people saying in Southern Min, “I can’t understand what you are talking about!” Or, “You can’t speak that language (Hakka)!” They talked to me like this in a very fierce tone. Or they said in Southern Min, “I can’t understand what you are talking about. You are saying bad things about me?” Just like this, my colleagues would speak to me. That is, you can’t speak Hakka! If you speak Hakka, they would suppose you were saying something bad about them. They felt very strongly about it. Very strongly! That is, you couldn’t speak the language that they couldn’t understand! But when they were speaking Southern Min, it seemed very reasonable to them that we couldn’t understand what they were talking about! (Alan, personal interview, May 25, 2006)

Alan recalled at that time, at first he was even not aware that people were shouting or yelling at him, because he could not understand Southern Min. So he asked his close colleague what that person was shouting about. Alan gradually understood some Southern Min words that people used to shout at him. Alan recalled humorously that he gradually learned to speak Southern Min well in this way. Alan stayed at the same factory for about 25 years until he retired.

## **Life in the City**

According to Alan's experiences, conflict between the majority and minority people was common in those years. The conflict between Southern Min and Hakka also existed in his living environment. When I interviewed Alan in his house, he told me that he and his wife, who was also a Hakka, had lived in this current house since the 1970s. He remembered his neighbors at first were not very welcoming and polite to them since they were Hakka people. Their neighbors did not have a great willingness to talk with them at first. Most people in the surrounding neighborhood were Southern Mins. But Alan and his wife tried to be polite and develop a good relationship with their neighbors. So, they communicated with their neighbors in Southern Min and Mandarin. Whenever there were activities in their neighborhood, they usually participated in those activities eagerly. They would try to express their generosity, for example by inviting their neighbors to their house. Alan recalled that gradually they built good relationships with their Southern Min neighbors. So, Alan's family had continued to live in this community until the present day. Some elderly people in the Southern Min families did not even allow their children to marry Hakka people. But the Hakka people usually did not have these kinds of thoughts. Alan remembered some of his neighbors got married to Hakka people, and the elders usually would express their disapproval. Alan recalled:

The neighbors here had lots of this kind of situation. For example, some elderly people hated their daughters-in-law who were Hakka people. So, in conversation they would say, "that Hakka!" (in Southern Min). The way they spoke showed their looking-down attitude about Hakka people. Do you know what it meant, "that Hakka!" It's the kind of language for looking down at people! (Alan, personal interview, May 25, 2006)

In Alan's view, it was a time when most people had some kind of misunderstanding or

stereotype about the Hakka people. In those days, most people's impression about the Hakkas was poverty and stinginess. Also, Hakka people's philosophy of living was different from that of Southern Min people. Alan thought this stereotyping was because most people did not have a good understanding about Hakka people. Also, there were not many Hakka people in cities; so, most people still continued to have this kind of stereotype about Hakka people.

Alan's wife was also a Hakka. They had five children. Alan and his wife taught their children to speak Hakka at home. So, Alan reported that his children all could speak Hakka very fluently. Alan's children were all grown up and some were already married. In Alan's view, it was natural to teach his own kids Hakka at home. Alan was very proud of being a Hakka. It was his mother tongue. Also, there were lots of positive aspects of Hakka culture and spirits. It was not necessary to be ashamed of speaking Hakka.

### **Being a Hakka Language Support Teacher**

Alan worked in the company for about 25 years. Six years ago, he retired from the company. After his retirement, Alan began to volunteer at the local hospital. At the same time, he participated in an association formed of Hakka people who came from several Hakka villages and towns in south Taiwan. Alan explained that the people who could speak Hakka in southern Taiwan cities were very few, and some had already become so-called "invisible" people. Some Hakka people had not taught their children Hakka. Alan felt that this phenomenon was serious, and that the Hakka language was declining.

When the news about the Hakka language support teacher's certification exam was announced, Alan participated in the exam. After passing the test, Alan began to teach in

several schools. Alan thought that in his old age, it was a necessary responsibility for him to transmit the Hakka language to the next generation. He believed Hakka people of his age needed to have this awareness to transmit the language, which otherwise would be lost on this island. He was proud of being a Hakka. Also, he felt that he could do this transmitting job at this time; it was really meaningful for him. Alan had taught in several schools, riding a motorcycle get there.

### **Views about Teaching Hakka**

*How to motivate students' interest in learning Hakka* was the most important thing for Alan. If students had no interest in the Hakka class, they would not continue to select Hakka for the next semester. So, in order to get students to keep coming to the Hakka class to learn Hakka, Alan thought employing a variety of activities in the class was important. In Alan's class, he structured his teaching procedures into three sections: reviewing the lessons of the previous class, learning new content in the textbooks, and activities. In addition to teaching the textbook content, Alan had his students do some additional activities. These activities were aimed at letting students experience the class as enjoyable. In Alan's view, students also learned to say some related Hakka words in these activities. Alan usually added to his teaching repertoire those activities his students enjoyed most. According to Alan, the most important thing was that the students needed to have an interest in their learning. If students had interest, this would inspire them to keep learning the language once they grow up. Alan remembered one time his students asked him to teach the song of "Hakka pun-set" (spirits of Hakka) again. Alan was very happy about this. It showed that the students liked this song, which was actually known



as the national song of Hakka. Alan said that in his classes, the students tended to like this song very much. So, Alan had taught his students to sing this song many times. After all, students also learned to say some Hakka words by learning to sing this song well. He believed this was a good way to learn Hakka.

Telling jokes in Hakka was one of Alan's common activities. Alan expressed that his students liked to listen to jokes. So, he had gathered many funny jokes. When I interviewed Alan, he showed me the jokes that he had gathered (Alan, personal interview field notes, June 8, 2006). Alan revealed that he tried to collect jokes which were appropriate for elementary school kids. Before using jokes with his students, he first told a joke to his wife at home, to get her opinion on whether it was funny for children. He told me that he felt he was much younger after being with young people. Alan told me that he usually told the jokes in Hakka at first, and then he told the jokes again in Mandarin. In Alan's view, this helped train the students' listening ability. As the students wanted to know what the joke was about, they would pay attention to Alan's Hakka joke. At the same time, it made the class fun. In Alan's experience, students liked this method. Sometimes at the beginning of the class, some of Alan's students were eager for him to tell the joke straight away. Alan, however, usually wanted his students to pay attention and learn the new content first, and then, if they paid attention to his teaching, he would tell the jokes.

Teaching children to play with traditional Hakka toys was another of Alan's strategies. When introducing the traditional Hakka toys to his students, Alan told the students the name of the materials in Hakka. Alan believed this would attract children to

his Hakka classes. When I interviewed him one afternoon in one of Alan's schools, he talked about what he had done in his class in that morning.

For example, today I brought the “bit bok e” (a traditional Hakka toys which is made of small bamboo). Like this! (He took out one from his backpack.) Sometimes I make some traditional Hakka toys to let my students play. These were what I played with during my childhood. I taught them (the students) how to play with it. Just let them play! Let them feel that it's fun to play with traditional Hakka toys. (Alan, personal interview, June 8, 2006)

*Hakka culture and values* were another important part of Alan's teaching. Alan expressed that he sometimes also made use of his class time to teach Hakka customs, for example, showing his students how to eat “ci ba.” Alan believed it was appropriate to teach students how to eat this traditional Hakka food politely. He thought this would help his students know how to behave well if they went to visit Hakka villages some day. Also, this made interesting content for the Hakka class. Alan explained his experience:

I demonstrated to my students how to eat “ci ba.” First, keep one chopstick still, and then use another chopstick to slowly cut the “ci ba” into small pieces. And then, use the chopsticks to slowly eat those small “ci ba.” Just eat in this very polite way. I told my students that I saw many people who didn't know how to eat. Many people used chopsticks to put the very big “ci ba” directly into their mouths. And then after putting it in the mouth, realizing it was too big (Laughing). That is a really embarrassing situation. “Ci ba” is one of the famous foods in our Hakka, so I think we need to transmit this kind of knowledge to the younger generation. It's also a kind of learning to learn how to eat and behave. (Alan, personal interview, May 25, 2006)

In Alan's view, teaching Hakka to students was not just limited to reading the textbook. By letting students become knowledgeable about Hakka lifestyle, habits and customs, they could really enter into Hakka life. Also, learning a language could not be separated from learning the culture.

Alan emphasizes the transmitting of Hakka culture and values to students. Alan

believed it was necessary to teach students some good qualities and virtues. In Alan's opinion, some Hakka virtues and values were full of meaning in this modern society, particularly the importance of the character and uprightness of the individual. These values seemed to be almost forgotten by people in modern society. The emphasis on a person's character and virtue was a worthy aspect of Hakka culture. In Alan's eyes, children needed to know these values in our society. Alan usually took opportunities to teach his students about good character. For example, he would find that in contemporary classrooms, the desks and chairs were covered in drawings. Since his students just came to this classroom to attend this Hakka class, Alan would ask them if they thought it was right to draw or carve on the desks and chairs. Alan wanted his students to think about this question. His students answered that it was not right to do so. Alan said it was necessary to make an opportunity to teach children this sort of thing. Transmitting Hakka to children was not only transmitting the language but also Hakka's precious cultural values and virtues.

Alan also gave another example about how he integrated some Hakka virtues into his class. One time, it was a class being held in the afternoon. One little boy came to Alan's class with a big apple, but threw his apple in the trashcan after a few bites. Alan then told the whole class a story about his early days. He recalled that one of his relatives, who lived in a city, sent a big apple to their home. In those days, apples were very precious and expensive. So his grandfather cut that apple into 10 pieces. And then everyone in the family could all taste the apple. Alan reported that some of his students felt disbelief about this. Alan said that frugality and cherishing things were important

Hakka cultural virtues. He wanted his students to know this and preserve these virtues.

Alan thought *developing children's listening and speaking abilities* in Hakka was also an important thing in teaching Hakka. He thought letting students become familiar with the common classroom command words in Hakka was a basic method. So, he stated that his students needed to speak and listen to Hakka words such as, "good morning, teacher," "good day, teacher," "stand up," "sit down," "be quiet" and "good bye." In Alan's experience, gradually most of his students could understand and learn to speak these words. Also important was the use of repetition in reviewing the vocabulary and sentences in the textbook. So, at the beginning of each class, he usually asked his students to repeat saying and listening to the material from the previous lesson. Alan believed the review and practice was important since there was only 40 minutes available each week for learning Hakka.

Alan also applied his classroom management rules in Hakka in order to let students become familiar with hearing the language. Alan used humorous ways to deal with students who had discipline problems in the classroom. Sometimes students in Alan's class made lots of noise by shaking or moving the desk and chair. Although Alan asked them to be quiet, these students still persist. So Alan used common Hakka words to describe that kind of behavior.

Some children, they are just like this (demonstrating the actions of moving and shaking the desk and chair noisily). I said, "Don't move! Don't make any noise!" But, later, when I turned to the blackboard and wrote something, this student began to make a loud noise again! So, I said to the whole class, "This is just like 'sii kung tsung, it tshiit thung.' Do you know what 'sii kung tsung' is? It is a kind of insect which is in the traditional toilet. It is just moving back and forth and at the same time making noise! So, you can call him 'sii kung tsung'" (laughing). (Alan, personal interview, June 8, 2006)

Some of Alan's students learned to say this word. So when Alan reprimanded a student who was making noise in the class, saying, "Don't make noise!" some other students would tease that student by saying "sii kung tsung." In Alan's view, although these were words for scolding people, this was also a good way to let students learn Hakka. Alan thought if children used these words in their daily life or on the playground, they had effectively learned some Hakka words. Part of Hakka culture meant sharing such words with close friends and family members and were not very serious words for scolding people. In this way, students would find that Hakka language also had its interesting aspects. He thought it was not necessary for everything related to learning the language to be very serious.

In Alan's experience, the upper grade level students had less willingness to participate in classroom activities. Sometimes when he was teaching students to sing Hakka songs or asking them to read the sentences in the textbook, some students seemed to not feel like singing or speaking up. Alan explained:

I am more concerned about the upper grade level students' learning situation. Some of them just don't want to speak up. No matter what I ask them to do, they just sit there. When I am teaching the song, they don't sing together. I tell them that I am already a 60-year-old, but I still sing and dance the Hakka song. (Alan, personal interview, May 25, 2006)

To encourage students to speak up, Alan used *encouragement* as an important tool. Teaching it was not necessary to demand that students speak absolutely correctly, it was more important just to encourage them to speak up. The goal was to let students feel comfortable in speaking up. And this also helped students have an enjoyable experience in the Hakka class. Alan thought that teachers needed to have lots of patience in using

encouragement. Alan, like Betty and Elizabeth, spent his own money buying prizes or little gifts in order to encourage his students to speak up. In Alan's view, it was necessary to do so since children need rewards to encourage them to learn.

### **Feelings about Hakka Teaching**

Alan felt that transmitting the Hakka language to the young generation was what people of his age needed to do right now. He said the responsibility of transmitting Hakka was falling on Hakka people aged between 40 and 60. He says:

If Hakka people my age don't teach Hakka, who will teach Hakka? Who will have willingness to do this task of transmitting language? I feel that the responsibility lies with our generation. I mean Hakka people who are from 40 to 60. If we don't do this, Hakka language will disappear from this island. I just think that we need to try our best to do the transmitting language and culture task now. As for its real effect, it's better than doing nothing. (Alan, personal interview, May 25, 2006)

Alan believed the decline of Hakka language on this island was already a fact. Currently people here did not need to blame the Mandarin Movement too much for its negative influence in causing this language decline. Alan thought blaming too much only caused conflict between different ethnic groups on the island. In his view, since there was the native language program currently in elementary schools, this was a very good opportunity to awaken Hakka people's awareness in maintaining and revitalizing the Hakka language. Alan felt great to have the opportunity to participate in the task of maintaining and revitalizing the Hakka language.

Alan stated that he spent lots of his time preparing his teaching materials, or thinking about things that would be interesting to his students, in order that his students might enjoy learning Hakka. One time, he carried lots of bamboo boards from his old Hakka hometown. He spent a lot of time cutting the bamboo boards into small pieces. He

wanted to let his students use the bamboo boards to beat out the rhythms while reading poetry. His wife thought that he was a little crazy to spend so much time doing this. When Alan talked to me about this, his wife also joined our conversation. She said that Alan was just like a fool in devoting himself to the Hakka teaching job. Alan did not earn lots of money from his teaching Hakka. Alan said his wages for teaching Hakka were all used in buying the rewards for his students. Truthfully these wages were not enough to buy those rewards. So, he spent his own money to buy rewards and prepare teaching materials for his students. Some of Alan's friends teased Alan that he was a fool to spend his own money and time on these Hakka teaching materials. They thought Alan would do better to enjoy his retired life. Alan did not think so. He explained:

I just want to do something for our Hakka. If Hakka people of my age don't be fools, who will be the fool? If there is no money, I will still teach Hakka for the kids in elementary schools. (Alan, personal interview, June 8, 2006)

In Alan's mind, all of these things were worthwhile if they could lead children to learn a little bit of Hakka, and let children develop an interest in learning Hakka. Also, Alan hoped that the implementation of the native language program would to some extent awaken the Hakka people's awareness in transmitting or speaking Hakka language with their children.

Alan knew about Hakka people's reticence to speak and maintain their Hakka language. In his retired life, he felt positive about devoting his time to this meaningful mission. He regarded his students as his own grandsons and granddaughters. Alan felt very encouraged that sometimes his students at school would greet him in Hakka by saying "good day, teacher" or very simple sentences in Hakka. Sometimes his students

came forward to recite the textbook to him when Alan came into the classroom. This pleased Alan greatly. In Alan's view, the task of transmitting Hakka language took time. Teachers needed to have patience while interacting with students.

### **Feelings about the Mandarin Movement**

When recalling the stories from his past about language usage, Alan felt he was like a living history. Alan thought the Mandarin Movement was reasonable given that the KMT needed to govern the people of Taiwan after they came from Mainland China. Since there were so many languages on this island at that time, it was necessary to have a common communication tool among different ethnic groups. In Alan's mind, speaking Mandarin was helpful for different ethnic group peoples to get along well with each other in Taiwan.

In Alan's view, the Mandarin Movement was an inevitable method for the government to use in governing the people when they came to this island. It was not necessary to blame the Mandarin Movement too much. Alan was adamant that it was not appropriate that the government did not have a related policy about the native languages of Taiwan. Alan believed the decline of the Hakka language was partly due to the Mandarin Movement of the past. However, according to his observations and experience, Hakka people's attitude and perception toward their own language and culture was also an important reason for the decline of the language. As Hakka was a minority language in Taiwan, many Hakka people, especially those who lived in cities, would rather speak Southern Min than Hakka. When Hakka people left their original Hakka hometowns and gradually migrated to cities for school and jobs, generally they had less willingness to



retain their own mother tongue. They thought it was not useful to speak a language which was spoken by few people in Taiwan, regardless of transmitting the Hakka language to the next generation. Alan gave an example which occurred a few days before my interviews with him, his interaction with three Hakka sisters who were visiting the Hakka Culture Museum where Alan served as a volunteer. He heard they communicated in Southern Min, and they told Alan in Southern Min, “Our Hakka people seem fewer and fewer in this island.” Alan expressed that this was a typical example of some Hakka people’s attitude toward their own language. They did not have the awareness to retain and speak their own mother tongue.

## **Chapter V: Emergent Themes and Analyses**

This chapter presents emergent themes and the analyses of them. The themes emerged from the researcher's analysis of the interview data gathered from ten native language teachers in Taiwanese elementary schools. These participants were interviewed about their stories, experiences, and views on the past Mandarin Movement and their native language teaching. Themes that emerged fell into three categories: participants' past experience with the Mandarin Movement, their views regarding their Hakka teaching and students' learning, and the factors that encouraged or frustrated their native language teaching.

### **Experiences with the Mandarin Movement**

In interviews, these participants were asked to recall their stories and feelings about their past experience with the Mandarin Movement. After the researcher analyzed the stories, the participants' experiences were divided into three stages: (1) elementary school, (2) after leaving their hometown, and (3) after entering the Hakka teaching field. Themes were generated within these three stages.

#### **Elementary School Experiences**

All participants recalled that their strongest impressions of the Mandarin Movement came from their elementary school days. Therefore, this section focuses on those experiences.

Some participants in this study (Greg, Charles, Alan, and Betty) were punished for not speaking Mandarin while they were in elementary school. Here, we take a look at several participants' stories.

Greg grew up in a typical Hakka village, located in south Taiwan. During his childhood, the residents there were all Hakka people. Greg's family was also a typical Hakka farmer's family, growing fruit, rice, and other crops. At home, the family all naturally spoke Hakka. Greg's parents could not speak Mandarin. His father had attended Japanese elementary school when the Japanese governed Taiwan, so he could speak Japanese. Greg's mother was an illiterate.

In elementary school, Greg recalled that everyone, including the principal, teachers, students, and staff were all Hakka people. Therefore, Greg said, it was natural that students inevitably spoke in Hakka at school. If the teacher heard someone speaking Hakka in or after class, that student would be punished. Greg said it was an era when corporal punishment was allowed on campus, so no one objected or protested when teachers physically punished students. Instead, such acts showed that the teacher was properly teaching the student, because the student had made a mistake or misbehaved at school. Speaking dialect was regarded as misbehavior at that time.

Greg remembered that the punishment would include some physical aspect. The teacher might grab the students' ears, scolding, "I already told you that you can't speak Hakka, but you still speak Hakka!" In addition, much stricter punishment included beating the students' feet with a stick. Some teachers would hit heavily with the stick, so parents would know when their children had been punished at school. Parents would know their children had misbehaved when they saw the scars on their feet. All students needed to be careful not to speak Hakka at school.

Greg recalled that once children got back home, it was natural to speak Hakka again.

For example, he would tell his mother, “Du ki e” (I am hungry), “Fan tsu ho mou” (Is dinner ready?), or “Ju tshoi mou” (What’s for dinner?). Alan’s parents usually told him and his siblings to go take a shower after they got back from school. For example, “Se siin e” (It’s time to take a shower). All the conversation was in Hakka; and the next morning, on the way to school, everyone still naturally talked in Hakka. So, very often, children would forget that speaking Hakka was prohibited once they entered the campus, and they were punished for it.

Greg related one of his vivid impressions of being punished for speaking Hakka at school. He was in the fifth grade and served as class leader. One day, during break time, Greg remembered that the next class would be geography class. The class leader’s responsibility was to go to the teacher’s office, take the wall map, and put it in the classroom before the geography teacher arrived. Greg went to take the map from the office and came back to his classroom. As he stood by the door, the school bell rang. Greg saw that the geography teacher was walking toward their classroom, but his classmates were still chatting and talking very loudly inside. As a class leader, Greg wanted his classmates to be quiet when the teacher entered. So, Greg told them, “de m de m, ai ma e, loi lo” (“Be quiet! The short teacher is coming!” Greg, personal interview, June 2, 2006). At the same time, the school’s dean of studies walked by and happened to hear Greg’s Hakka words. Greg recalled,

He wanted me to walk beside him. And then he grasped my cheek. He said, “Every morning in the school assembly, I constantly announce that everyone can’t speak dialect at school. But you still speak the dialect!” He kept shaking my cheek and scolding me at the same time (Greg, personal interview, June 2, 2006)

Greg said he did not have any particular feelings about his punishment. He just

wondered why he had been so careless as to have made such a mistake. Students generally respected their teachers. Greg expressed that he had strong feelings when he compared his elementary school experience to the current native language implementation in elementary schools. He said it was really a different situation, and a different time.

Charles grew up in a small Hakka village in north Taiwan. He also came from a typical Hakka farming family. Students in Charles' elementary school were mostly Hakka, as were most of the teachers. Some teachers were retired soldiers who came from Mainland China. Charles and other close classmates secretly called these teachers "ngoi sen e" (Mainlanders). He recalled that this nickname had better not be heard by those teachers; otherwise, children would be punished.

Charles remembered that some of his homeroom teachers had strict punishment methods when students spoke Hakka at school, while others did not. The punishment for speaking dialect at school included hanging a card around one's neck, being fined some money, reading the Mandarin textbook in Hakka, writing the sentence, "I have to speak Mandarin" many times on paper, and the teacher squeezing a student's mouth/cheek.

Charles encountered all of these methods when he was in elementary school. Very often, he accidentally spoke some Hakka words when he was with other children, especially during the break time. He said it was really difficult for him to always remember to speak Mandarin at school, when he was surrounded by a Hakka-speaking environment. Charles recalled that he was often punished for being a little naughty during his elementary school days. When asked if any event left a strong impression, Charles

responded that he could not remember any particular incident, because there were so many. He replied to my question with a smile.

As described in the previous chapter, Alan and Betty encountered punishment for not speaking Mandarin during their elementary school days. Alan recalled that he was often punished because of incidentally speaking Hakka in school when he was in lower grades, and he gradually learned not to speak Hakka when he was in the upper grades. Alan did not blame the rules that the school set; he blamed himself for not obeying the rules. Betty was fined for speaking one sentence in Hakka during the break time. After that, Betty was cautious not to speak Hakka at school.

Joan, Doris, Ivy, and Elizabeth recalled that they were so-called “good” students when they were in elementary school, so they did not personally experience punishment for speaking Hakka at school.

Joan was from a Hakka village in northern Taiwan. Her family was a typical, traditional Hakka farm family. Her parents grew crops in the fields to earn a living. Joan recalled that her parents were always busy working on the farm during her childhood.

In Joan’s elementary school, students spoke Mandarin in class. Hakka could be spoken after class. Joan did not have many memories of her own or her classmates’ punishments for speaking Hakka at school. She recalled that she was also a so-called “good” student at that time, trying her best to speak Mandarin fluently and correctly.

I remembered that I was like a Mainlander. I was very proud to act like a Mainlander! I was the ‘good student’ type at that time. I learned to speak Mandarin very well. I also went to participate in lots of Mandarin composition and speech contests. I could imitate the accents of Mainlanders. For example, “wo zi ger er” (myself)—I would imitate that accent on purpose (laughing). So, I was never punished because of speaking the dialect at school (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

Joan remembered that she always asked herself to speak standard Mandarin. In this way, other people would think she was an excellent student. She had several teachers from Mainland China, and Joan and her classmates all liked to learn their Mandarin accent. They thought that if students could speak the Jeuan-sher sounds<sup>4</sup> in Mandarin well, then they had better Mandarin. It also showed that these students were of a higher class. Therefore, usually, Joan and her classmates spoke Mandarin at school.

Doris grew up in a Hakka town in the middle of Taiwan. During her childhood, most of its residents were Hakka people. When Doris was little, her father worked in a private bank. Her mother was a housewife. Doris had four other siblings.

Doris recalled that during her elementary school days, everyone spoke Mandarin at school. Hakka was only spoken after leaving the schoolground, but Doris still talked with her friends and classmates in Mandarin on the way home. She remembered that they acquired the habit of always speaking Mandarin. The teachers had set some rules for punishing students who did not speak Mandarin at school. Doris did not pay much attention to those rules, because they did not seem to relate to her. Doris recalled that she had very good performance in her studies at that time; she was a good student who always obeyed teachers' and school rules. Whenever she entered the school, Doris automatically spoke Mandarin. After getting home, she spoke Hakka. Doris recalled that the punishments for students who spoke dialects at school might not have been very serious, so she did not retain strong impressions about them. Back then, Doris thought speaking Mandarin was higher class behavior, while speaking Hakka was considered

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<sup>4</sup> The pronunciation of a Chinese character, which requires the tongue to roll up.

lower class.

Ivy grew up in a typical small Hakka village in the southern part of Taiwan. Her family relied on growing vegetables for a living. Southern Min people lived in the next village. Ivy remembered that she sometimes accompanied her mother on trips to the Southern Min village to sell their vegetables. Ivy learned to speak Southern Min when she was in elementary school, because in these selling transactions, she had opportunities to interact with the Southern Min people. Ivy usually spoke Mandarin at school and automatically spoke Hakka when she got home. Ivy's mother asked her and her siblings to speak Hakka at home. She thought that Hakka was their ethnic group language, and wanted everyone in the family to retain it. Ivy's mother even told her that she needed to marry a Hakka man when she grew up.

Ivy remembered that during her elementary school days, everyone needed to speak Mandarin on schoolgrounds. Ivy always followed the rules and did not have any experience of being punished for speaking dialect at school. She recalled that teachers often reminded their students to speak Mandarin at school; otherwise, students who did not would be punished. Ivy always listened to what her teachers said, and was a good student who obeyed school rules. Since speaking dialects was prohibited at school, she just kept this in mind. Also, Ivy recalled that speaking Hakka was considered low-class behavior at school, so, naturally, she avoided it.

Elizabeth, as described in the previous chapter, was a so-called “good” student during her elementary school days. She said that she never “made a mistake” of speaking Hakka at school. She spoke Mandarin when she was at school as well as out with her



playmates. And after getting home from school, she automatically spoke Hakka.

Some participants in this study, for example, Helen and Flora, remembered that they followed the rules by asking the students to only speak Mandarin at school. These participants got accustomed to speaking only Mandarin there.

Helen was also from a Hakka village, located in northern Taiwan. Her father and grandfather were civil servants who worked in the local government offices when Helen was little. Several of her uncles were teachers. Helen recalled that because her father, grandfather, and uncles all spoke Mandarin in their workplaces, it was natural that they spoke Mandarin with their children at home. Her father talked with her mother in Hakka, but he spoke with his children in Mandarin. Helen's mother was a housewife, and a traditional Hakka woman. She spoke only Hakka; she could not speak Mandarin when Helen was little. Helen recalled that she usually responded to her mother in Mandarin, although her mother talked to Helen in Hakka. When Helen was little, she even teased her mother, whose Hakka Si-hsien accent became more obvious whenever she came back from visiting her original home. Helen admitted now that her early behavior was childish.

I just thought my mother's Hakka accent was very strange! So I laughed at that. Haha! (Laughing) My mother seemed to get used to being laughed by us (Helen, personal interview, May 22, 2006).

Although Helen spoke Mandarin most of the time, she still retained her Hakka. Because she was very close to her grandmother, she continued to communicate in Hakka with her grandmother.

Helen had two younger brothers. After they got home from school, Helen and her brothers all talked in Mandarin. In her early days, Helen thought that speaking Hakka did

not demonstrate a high standard of behavior; therefore, she did not like to speak it. Helen believed now that it was because the school infused students with the concept that it was poor behavior if people did not speak Mandarin at school.

Helen remembered some slogans on the bulletin board that said, “Do not speak the dialect in school,” which meant that once students entered the schoolground, they needed to speak Mandarin. No limitations were placed on which language students could be spoken out of school. Helen thought the rules punishing students who spoke dialect at school were reasonable, and not serious. For example, if someone spoke one sentence in a dialect, he/she would be asked to stand for a while in front of the other classmates. Or if someone spoke Hakka, the homeroom teacher would grasp the student’s mouth or cheek, or scold, “Speak Mandarin at school!” Helen never found this to be a “big deal.” She was never punished for speaking Hakka at school, because she always spoke Mandarin. Helen thought her school was very successful in advocating Mandarin speech. She recalled,

At that time we just thought it was not right, or a very high standard of behavior, to speak dialect in school! Speaking Mandarin was more superior, more knowledgeable. So, I would not talk with my classmates in Hakka. Everyone always spoke Mandarin. Also, if a person could say the rolling sounds well, then that person was number one! (Big laughter) It showed that they were the best! (Helen, personal interview, May 22, 2006).

Helen believed that people around her got used to always speaking Mandarin. She said,

About the Mandarin Movement, I think it’s a ‘habit.’ Everyone in the environment spoke Mandarin. Since everyone always speaks it, it’s very natural to accept the Mandarin Movement. I’d already gotten used to it. Anyway, I just spoke Mandarin, so I don’t have strong impressions about it. I didn’t experience very strict punishment (Helen, personal interview, May 22, 2006).

Helen had her own view regarding children who were punished for speaking Hakka at school. She said,

I think it's related to people's family education; it's also related to their habits at home. If people were used to speaking Mandarin at home, then they would naturally speak Mandarin at school. They would not make such a mistake there. But if they always spoke Hakka at home, then they would naturally speak Hakka at school (Helen, personal interview, May 22, 2006).

Another participant, Flora, also grew accustomed to speaking Mandarin during her early days. Flora was from a Hakka town in the middle of Taiwan. Her father owned a store in the town and communicated with customers in both Southern Min and Hakka, depending on the client. Flora's mother was a housewife who spoke both Hakka and Mandarin at home. Flora's parents talked with her in Hakka, and she responded to them in both Hakka and Mandarin. Her parents did not ask her and her siblings to speak strictly Hakka at home. So, after coming back from school, Flora usually talked with her siblings in Mandarin. Flora said that originally, her mother could not speak any Mandarin, but later learned to speak a little under their influence.

Flora did not have a vivid impression of the Mandarin Movement in her elementary years. She only knew that it was a rule for everyone to speak Mandarin while at school. Flora and almost all of her classmates had gotten used to speaking Mandarin there. She remembered that only a few students with severe behavior problems would speak a few words in dialect and be punished by the teacher. Flora did not pay much attention to those students during her elementary school days. She just recalled that everyone usually spoke Mandarin after entering the schoolground, because speaking Mandarin was the rule at school.

### **Analysis**

From these participants' elementary school experiences, we know that under the

influence of the schools' Mandarin Movement, some participants in this study hold different perceptions toward the status of the languages. Some expressed the view that Mandarin was regarded as higher status; whereas, Hakka was regarded as a lower class language, and was only spoken at home. The big distinction between home use language and school use language (School-Mandarin, home-Hakka) led these participants to think that Mandarin was superior to other dialects, because Mandarin was spoken in school; dialect was spoken only at home. This attitude corresponds to the study done by Lu (1988), in which the respondents tended to have positive attitudes toward Mandarin and its speakers. The respondents viewed Mandarin as being superior to other native languages of this island. Also, Lu found that speaking Mandarin was associated positively with a good image and higher personal ability. To Elizabeth, Doris, and Joan, speaking Mandarin meant that they were "good students." Only bad students would "make the mistake" of speaking dialect in school.

The punishment rules set by schools and teachers led these participants to feel that Mandarin was superior to their own ethnic language. Speaking Mandarin well meant that a person was more civilized. Students' ethnic languages were only permitted to be spoken outside the school; once students arrived at school, they needed to speak Mandarin.

Here, the issues of ideology and hegemony also appear. Giroux (1983) indicated, "Ideology functions as a system of representations, carrying meanings and ideas that structure the unconscious of students" (p. 81). McLaren (1989) also stated, "Ideology can be described as a way of viewing the world, a complex of ideas, various types of social practices, rituals and representations that we tend to accept as natural and as common

sense. It is the result of the intersection of meaning and power in the social world.” From these points, we know that students’ ideologies are usually formed unconsciously, especially for elementary school students. The plasticity of children at this age is high, and they usually lack the ability to distinguish between reality and what they imagine. They are like pieces of blank paper without any stains. Their school experiences will form most of their views about certain things. After all, they spend more time at school than at home.

Apple and Giroux described how both the content and form of the curriculum were ideological in nature (Apple, 1990; Giroux, 1981). Generally, the ideas and culture associated with the dominant class are argued to be the ideas and content of schooling. Dominant culture is described as those “social practices and representations that affirm the central values, interests, and concerns of the social class in control of the material and symbolic wealth of society” (McLaren, 1989, p. 172).

In addition, another issue involved is the hidden curriculum, which refers to those unintended, but quite real outcomes and features of the schooling process (Dreeben, 1976; Apple, 1975, 1990; Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1989). The “hidden curriculum” is distinguished from the “overt” curriculum, or the planned curriculum, including objectives. Apple was among the first to assert curriculum as political text in the 1970s. He defined the hidden curriculum in a way that pointed to the concept of hegemony, another important notion for politically oriented curriculum scholars.

The hidden curriculum played an important role in children’s schooling experiences. From these participants’ stories, we know that as children, they experienced a wide range

of contests and activities dominated by the official language. These included Mandarin speech contests, Mandarin composition contests, Mandarin singing contests, etc. No activities were ever related to native languages. Under the effect of the hidden curriculum, the participants developed their attitudes toward these languages—that Mandarin was superior to the native languages.

From these participants' experiences, we also recognize the elementary schools' great power in developing students' perceptions and attitudes toward languages. The Mandarin Movement is a top-down language planning activity. It influenced these participants to believe that speaking Mandarin was a high-class behavior; speaking dialects was low-class behavior. The Mandarin Movement was serious during the years participants attended elementary school; this is coincident with the literature about the Mandarin Movement. Hung (1992) and Chan (1994) stated that the heaviest responsibilities were placed on elementary schools to implement the Mandarin Movement.

Although some participants in this study were punished in their elementary schools for not speaking Mandarin, they did not say that the punishment caused them any negative psychological effects. This attitude was not supported in Chen's (1998) research. The participants in this study attributed their punishment to the fact that they did not follow the rule. Being punished for disobeying the rule under that social context, at that time, was natural for them. This attitude might relate to traditional Chinese thinking, where teachers play an important role in helping cultivate students' behavior. Teachers and schools are well-respected in Taiwan society, and have a duty to correct students if

they make mistakes at school. Because parents usually regard teachers as experts in education, they will respect any decision the teachers make.

Most participants in this study came from typical farming families, but some people, like Helen, spoke Mandarin at home even with her family members. Her father worked as a civil servant in the local government office. Her other relatives worked at school or in local district government offices. At home, her father spoke with her in Mandarin instead of Hakka. This phenomenon agrees with the statement in Young's (1989) study, that speaking Mandarin is related to higher socioeconomic status and better education.

In addition, these participants' experiences show that under the Mandarin rules in their schools, the children's use of Mandarin and attitude toward the language already extended to their family domains. This finding is in line with statements of Huang (1988) and Berg (1985). Fishman (1964, 1965, 1968) found that certain institutional contexts exist, called *domains*, in which one language variety is likely to be more appropriate than another. Domains are taken to be constellations of factors such as location, topic, and participants. A typical domain, for example, would be the *family* domain. If a speaker at home talks to another member of her family about an everyday topic, that speaker is said to be in the family domain (Fasold, 1984, p. 183). We can see that in Helen's home, Mandarin had already become the main language for communication since her elementary school days. Flora and her siblings gradually spoke only Mandarin at home, as well, because her parents did not strictly ask them to speak Hakka. Interestingly, Flora indicated that her mother eventually learned to speak a little Mandarin due to her children's influence. For people like Helen and Flora, their old family members did not

strictly ask the succeeding generation to retain their own ethnic language. Their native language was influenced by Mandarin, a language used for schooling and public places.

### **After Leaving the Hometown**

Participants in this study said that after leaving their Hakka hometowns, they came to be aware of their own ethnic language and group identity. Most participants began to feel that their Hakka identity and language relegated them to a minority status, and that they were not welcome in their surrounding environments. Some of them (Joan, Doris, and Flora) hid their Hakka identities and did not want to speak their dialect, in order to integrate more successfully into the society. Other participants (Alan, Charles, and Greg) even experienced ethnic conflicts when they interacted with people from the majority group (Southern Min), so they gradually learned to speak Southern Min well. Yet other participants (Helen and Elizabeth) grew accustomed to always speaking Mandarin, and did not experience any conflicts with other groups of people. They were not aware of their Hakka identities when they were away from home. Their friends and coworkers did not even know they were Hakka. This section relates these participants' stories regarding the language experiences that occurred in their studies and workplaces after they left their hometowns.

Some participants recalled that after leaving their hometowns, they experienced ethnic conflicts when they revealed their Hakka identities to people from the majority group (Southern Min). Because of the tension resulting from these interactions, the participants gradually learned to speak the majority language (Southern Min). Most of the



time, they spoke Mandarin and Southern Min.

Greg encountered his awareness of being a Hakka when he was in senior vocational high school, after he left his hometown to study in a bigger city. At that time, Greg commuted by bus every day. There were seven Hakka people in his class; the other classmates were all Southern Mins. That was the first time Greg realized the Hakka were a minority. The seven Hakka classmates usually went out together for activities. Greg recalled,

I became aware of my Hakka identity in my first year of senior high school. For example, when our whole class went out picnicking or hiking, we seven Hakka people naturally got together. I think the first thing that bound us was that our language was different from that of our other classmates. Also, it just seemed that we were different from other people. We were afraid that we were alone (Greg, personal interview, June 2, 2006).

Greg remembered that the distinctions between Southern Min and Hakka groups, and the Hakka isolation, were very obvious. He theorized that the cause might have been his classmates' lack of understanding of Hakka people, and the fact that there were not many Hakka in the big city. In addition, Greg did not understand the Southern Min language. But in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, Greg began to learn some Southern Min. At the same time, his classmates began to have a better understanding of each other, so the segregation between the two groups lessened.

After graduating from senior high school, Greg took a job in a factory. He no longer lived in his hometown; he lived alone in a big city, renting a house from Southern Min people. From that time on, Greg was really integrated into the Southern Min living environment and could speak the language very fluently. Since then, Greg has always spoken Southern Min and Mandarin. He only spoke Hakka when he returned to his

hometown to visit his family. After working for two years, Greg went into the military, which had a Mandarin-speaking living environment. People there would not express their ethnicities, because everyone spoke Mandarin.

After coming back from the military, Greg went to college. He remembered that very few of his classmates would publicly express their Hakka identities. In addition, very few of his classmates were Hakka. Southern Min was more often spoken among his classmates. Whether in the dormitory or in the classroom, the conversation usually was in Southern Min. Greg worked in several places after graduating from college. In his experience, most Hakka people who lived in cities usually hid their Hakka identities, fearful because in those days, people were under the impression that the Hakka were poor, stingy, and came from rural areas. Greg thought that common people did not have a good understanding of Hakka culture. He explained,

People's negative impressions about Hakka people were that they are stingy and frugal. They think that the Hakka are not very generous. In general, it is true that Hakka people are very frugal. But put it in more negative way, it means stingy. Actually, this is because the Hakka earn a living by agriculture, and they are from the countryside. So after going to big cities, many Hakka people naturally keep their living philosophy by working hard and practicing frugality. They usually ask themselves to live in a more frugal way (Greg, personal interview, June 6, 2006).

Therefore, in Greg's experience, based on the stereotype about the Hakka group, many Hakka people usually hid their identities and did not even like to talk in Hakka. Some of them also gave up speaking Hakka, instead speaking Southern Min, in order to integrate into the majority group environment. They were afraid that other people would look down them as being a minority. Greg remembered that some of his bosses or managers in those days did not like to express their Hakka identities in public. Only their

acquaintances knew they were Hakka. For an ordinary person, revealing his/her Hakka identity could cause loss of friendship. So most of the time, Greg did not recognize the Hakka people in his living environment.

Greg did not think it was necessary to always hide his Hakka identity. He thought there were very good aspects in the Hakka culture and values. In addition, he did not deny that he came from a farm background and rural area. So, around ten years ago, Greg formed a Hakka club in the place where he used to work. Greg's intention was for Hakka people to be united, to preserve the good aspects of Hakka culture. He recalled that the club was eventually asked to change its name from "Hakka Club" to "Chinese Culture Club." Some people thought the name "Hakka Club" would divide the ethnic groups on this island.

Greg stated that whenever he needed to, he liked to reveal his Hakka identity. He thought that Hakka people needed to clarify the common stereotype about them. Since Hakka were the minority, many people did not understand them. Greg said that in these past few years, he had tried his best to show the good aspects of the Hakka group. Sometimes in social gatherings at his workplace, he freely expressed that he was a Hakka. He sang some Hakka mountain songs and talked to his colleagues about Hakka-related ideas. In Greg's view, Hakka people needed to speak their language naturally and admit their identities.

Another participant, Alan, as we saw in the previous chapter, also recalled his experiences on encountering ethnic conflicts when he revealed his Hakka identity after he left his hometown to work and live in a big city. He noted that speaking Mandarin and

Southern Min was common in his daily life in the city.

Other participants recalled that, after leaving their hometowns, they also got used to hiding their Hakka identities. In addition, they were not willing to speak Hakka, in order to integrate into the society. Here, we take a look at Doris' and Joan's stories.

Doris first realized her Hakka identity in her junior high school years. After graduating from elementary school, she attended a junior high school in a bigger city, commuting every day on the bus. She left home for school early and came back home late in the evening. At that time, Doris came to be aware of her Hakka identity and began to hide it. Doris found that she was the only Hakka in her class.

I found that in our class, I was the lone Hakka. My classmates didn't even know what Hakka people were. Most of my classmates were Mainlanders, since there were lots of Mainlanders in that city. Other classmates were Southern Min (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

Doris remembered that she heard a few of her classmates, who came from the same hometown as she did, speaking a little Hakka when they were on the bus. Doris never spoke Hakka at school at that time, because there were no other Hakka people who could speak the language. Also, she thought speaking Hakka was a low-class behavior. Doris recalled:

At that time, my classmates thought I was a Mainlander, since my Mandarin was very standard. It seemed that most Hakka people could speak very standard Mandarin. So, many people thought I was a Mainlander (laughing). I felt very happy about that; I didn't clarify it (Doris, personal interview, June 22, 2006).

The same situation continued when Doris attended senior high school, which was also in a big city. After graduation, Doris went to another bigger city to study. Doris did not even speak one word in Hakka when she was away from home during those years.

She recalled that she seemed to become a so-called “invisible” Hakka:

I really became an invisible Hakka! Ya, it seemed that I seldom spoke Hakka, unless I went back home and talked with my siblings and parents. So now when I think back, I feel that it was an unfortunate time for Hakka, because very few people spoke it then (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

Doris remembered thinking that her Hakka language was not high class. She said,

I just felt that speaking the dialect was some kind of low-class behavior. I think the government’s policy at that time let people feel that speaking the dialect was very vulgar and not high standard. So I intended not to speak Hakka; I rejected speaking in Hakka (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

Doris’ unwillingness to speak Hakka resulted in her Hakka language capacity declining. Doris was challenged about her Hakka ability when she went back to her hometown, after graduating from college, to teach in a junior high school. At this time, Doris came to be aware of her loss of abilities. She recalled,

I went back to my hometown to teach. At that time, since I seldom spoke Hakka, I found that I couldn’t speak Hakka very fluently. In my hometown, most people were Hakka, including students and my colleagues. I found that they spoke Hakka very naturally. So, some of my relatives teased me by saying, “Are you a Hakka?” (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

After being teased by her relatives, Doris became more willing to speak Hakka again. But she still said that her past attitude toward Hakka was not appropriate, and not very positive. She left her hometown after teaching there for three years, and went to teach in a big city. She remembered that one of her colleagues was also a Hakka. Once that colleague wanted to speak Hakka with Doris, but Doris rejected the opportunity. She thought Hakka should only be spoken at her home. Additionally, Doris’ accent was different from her colleague’s, so she did not like to talk with her in Hakka. In retrospect, Doris thought her attitude toward Hakka was not correct. After teaching Hakka in

elementary schools, she began to realize that although there were different accents in the Hakka language, they were all understandable, and all belonged to the same language. Doris thought that part of the reason why the Hakka language was declining was because some Hakka people, liked her, did not have appropriate attitudes toward their own language. They thought it was a language just spoken at home, not a high standard language.

Joan recalled that she did not feel any difference as a Hakka until she grew up and went to a bigger city, where she felt that people in the surrounding environment were all either Southern Min or Mainlanders. Joan hid her Hakka identity when she was in the city, not liking to let people to know she was a Hakka. Revealing this fact often made her feel that people looked down on her. Joan said,

At that time, I began to become one of the so-called ‘invisible people,’ just like most Hakka people who lived in the big city. I don’t like to let people mention that I am a Hakka. Actually, I was not originally afraid to let people know that I was a Hakka. The reason was that people always called us ‘that Hakka!’ (in Southern Min), whenever they mentioned us. I felt very bad when people said so, and I tried to hide my Hakka identity. Now, when I think back, that feeling was very miserable (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

Some of Joan’s relatives also experienced this same situation. They did not want people to know they were Hakka. Some of Joan’s relatives owned their businesses in big cities. They sold vegetables in the traditional markets. Joan even asked them, “Why didn’t you express that you are Hakka? Don’t your neighbors all know you are Hakka?” Her relatives responded by saying, “In order to integrate into the majority group’s living environment, we dare not express that we are Hakka” (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006). Joan’s relatives said it was not safe to let people know their Hakka identities; that

it was better to let people think of them as Southern Min. So, they raised their children by speaking Southern Min and Mandarin instead of Hakka.

In Joan's experience, many Hakka people in big cities often hid their identities, because others had negative stereotypes of the Hakka. In addition to the slur about stinginess, Hakka men were not regarded as considerate. These stereotypes still existed currently. Joan talked about her son, who would soon graduate from college. His girlfriend broke up with him after he revealed he was a Hakka. Joan recalled,

But, how do you know? Many people still have this kind of stereotype about Hakka people. Some young Southern Min people's perceptions are still affected by their families. Very strange! They just think that Hakka people are stingy. Hakka men are not considerate. It's all a very negative impression! This situation still exists today. So I feel very bad after hearing what my son told me (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

Joan's believed the misperceptions were due to the Hakka group's being a minority in society. The stereotypes of Hakka people resulted in misunderstandings about them; therefore, some Hakka would rather not admit their identities in order to integrate into the surrounding environment. Yet, these Hakka retained their language and transmit it to the next generation.

Some participants recalled that they got used to always speaking Mandarin. They said they were not aware of their Hakka identities before they entered the Hakka teaching field. They avoided ethnic conflicts when interacting with other groups of people because they seldom revealed their Hakka origins. They found Mandarin to be a very convenient tool for interacting with people. Here, we look at one of the typical examples, from Flora's experience.

Flora seldom spoke Hakka after leaving her hometown to attend senior high school

in another big city. Hakka was only spoken when she got home on holidays. In her memory, she did not speak any Hakka at all when she was away from her hometown. During those days, Flora did not pay attention to who were Hakka people. After she became involved in teaching Hakka these past few years, Flora gradually learned that some of her classmates in her senior high school had been Hakka. While participating in some Hakka activities, Flora encountered her former senior high school classmates and realized that some had actually been Hakka. Now Flora and her old classmates like to chat with each other in Hakka. But when she was in senior high school, no one expressed their Hakka identities. Flora said this was a really interesting phenomenon.

Flora learned to speak Southern Min when she was in college. She recalled that she had three roommates in the dormitory. Two roommates were Southern Min, and one was a Mainlander. Most of the time, they talked in Mandarin. Gradually Flora learned to speak Southern Min, since that language was very commonly spoken in the surrounding environment. But Flora said, “I didn’t speak any Hakka when I was in college. During those four years, I totally didn’t speak any word in Hakka! Not at all” (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

After graduating from college, Flora worked as a secretary in a Japanese company in a big city. At that company, Japanese, Mandarin, and Southern Min were the most common languages. Flora remembered that she did not like her boss very much. She sometimes complained about him to one of her colleagues, a Hakka secretary who became her close friend. Flora stayed at that company for eight years, and in retrospect, said that was the time when she spoke the most Hakka. It became the intimate language



between Flora and her friend.

Flora remembered that her boss was a Hakka, but he did not want to admit it. Although he talked on the phone with his wife in Hakka, he did not like to publicly admit his roots. Flora said that she and her close colleague would privately laugh at this situation. However, Flora understood her boss' motivations, and explained,

In the past, Hakka people represented poverty! People's impressions about the Hakka were poverty and stinginess. So, some Hakka people liked to show they could speak Southern Min because they were afraid to be looked down on by other people. In the past, the Hakka were looked down upon because they were the minority. So actually, Hakka people are very pitiful (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Flora recalled her past language experience before entering the Hakka teaching field. She thought Mandarin was very convenient when she interacted with people, so she spoke it all the time. In Flora's experience, speaking Mandarin did not have any negative results; it bridged the distance between different ethnic groups and reduced the problem of ethnic differences. Flora thought that learning to speak Southern Min, the majority group's language, was very helpful in integrating into society. But she thought most Hakka people who lived in cities did not have an appropriate attitude towards retaining their Hakka language. Flora reflected on her own past attitude toward the Hakka language; she felt that she lacked the awareness of its value. She attributed the reason for Hakka's decline not only to the Mandarin Movement; it was also related to Hakka's minority status and the majority culture's stereotypes about the Hakka. Therefore, in order to maintain and revitalize the Hakka language, Flora said that people of Hakka origin needed to have appropriate perceptions towards retaining their own ethnic language and transmitting it to the next generation.

## **Analysis**

From these participants' experiences, we can see that after they went to bigger cities, left their hometowns to study for senior high or college, and joined the workforce, they began to be aware of ethnic group differences. The awareness appeared gradually. In the participants' hometowns, the surrounding environment was mostly Hakka-speaking people. Although there were a few Southern Min and Mainlander children at school, the ethnic differences were not so obvious—everyone at school spoke Mandarin. Hakka was for use at home. However, when participants left their hometowns for studies or work in another city, they began to feel their minority status in the society. The whole society was composed of several ethnic groups, with the largest group being Southern Min. This group did not know very many Hakka people. The Southern Min were also familiar with Mandarin, since speaking Mandarin was promoted at school. Therefore, when people of the majority group encountered people from the minority Hakka group, strange feelings or ethnic conflicts appeared. According to Driedger (1980), ethnic conflicts arise when group differences lead to competition, confrontation, and sometimes, outright hostility. There exists here a “dialectic of incompatibles” (cited in Edwards, 1985, p. 105). Also, the majority group naturally expressed inappropriate attitudes toward people of the minority group, based on certain stereotypes about them. According to Stalcup (1968), a stereotype is a generally held conception of a particular group arrived at on the basis of limited knowledge concerning the total group membership (p. 79). We can see the influence of the Mandarin Movement here: It resulted in people's insufficient knowledge or understanding about other ethnic groups or languages. If students were not

discouraged from speaking their own mother tongues at school, students of different ethnic groups could have opportunities for contact with each others' languages. Each person could freely express his or her ethnic identity in school. Thus, students might have cultivated more tolerance and respect toward different ethnic groups' languages and people—which would have helped them become more mature citizens in society. Therefore, knowing people from other ethnic groups, speaking even a little of their language, respecting other groups, and appreciating their cultures need to be fostered in students' schooling, a domain for cultivating future citizens. Currently, the implementation of the native language program in elementary schools has its contribution in cultivating children's appropriate perceptions and attitudes toward the people and languages of different ethnic groups in society.

In addition, after the participants in this study left their Hakka hometowns to go to big cities, speaking Mandarin became their safest tool for communicating with people from different ethnic groups. Some participants recalled that they did not express their Hakka identities and spoke Mandarin all the time. Therefore, they did not encounter ethnic conflicts with other groups. After going into society, speaking Mandarin became a protective umbrella for the participants in this study. This is the positive influence of the Mandarin Movement.

Furthermore, these participants saw several reasons for the decline of the Hakka language. Indeed, in the past, the Mandarin Movement labeled Hakka speaking as a low-class behavior, while speaking Mandarin was more high-class. Several participants in this study recalled that they had these perceptions toward Hakka and Mandarin, and

gradually stopped speaking their mother tongue. In addition, it seemed that knowing Hakka was not very useful for survival in society, because just a few people spoke the minority language. Native Hakka speakers chose instead to speak the majority group's language—Southern Min, which was a more useful language for integrating into society. In addition, the stereotyped image of Hakka people as stingy and impoverished also led some Hakka to hide their identities. These individuals became the so-called “invisible people.” It is reasonable to assume that these Hakka will not want to transmit their language to their next Hakka generation. Kulick (1992) stated that “The conceptions people have about language, children, the self, and the place of these in those people's interpretation of their social world are central to an understanding of why they come to abandon their language” (p. 17). In a word, the past Mandarin Movement had positive and negative influences on this island's languages and ethnic groups. The movement, indeed, helped cause the decline of the Hakka language. However, it is also necessary to consider other factors, such as social situations (Hakka's minority status), cultural factors (the characteristics of Hakka people's more conservative traits), and the influence of people's migration to cities as other possible factors resulting in the decline of Hakka language in this island.

### **After Entering the Hakka Teaching Field**

In this study, these participants' involvement in the native language program had enhanced their identities and awareness of their own language and ethnic group. After becoming involved in the Hakka teaching field, some participants realized that their past

perceptions toward their own language (regarding it as low-class) were not appropriate. Now they realized that their mother tongue was full of rich cultural meanings and values. They had begun to love their heritage, language, and culture, and were doing something to compensate their native language. For example, they began to teach Hakka to their own children, even if their children had already grown up. For participants who previously retained the Hakka language, their involvement in Hakka teaching provided them an opportunity to have a better understanding of their heritage, culture, and history. Overall, these participants stated that their identities toward their own language and culture have been strengthened after entering the Hakka teaching field.

Doris taught Chinese in junior high school for over 25 years and retired a few years ago. Earlier, she had never thought about teaching Hakka. Doris' involvement in Hakka teaching can be traced back to a single incident. Her sister was a Hakka language support teacher, and once asked Doris to substitute for her when she had something else to do. After spending just one day in class, Doris decided to become a Hakka language support teacher herself. Compared to her previous Chinese teaching experience, Doris found that teaching Hakka was more meaningful. She said,

After I began to teach Hakka, I gradually found that I was much happier than when I taught Chinese in junior high school. After all, Hakka is my mother tongue. I feel that I owe Hakka from before, and now I would like to compensate it. I am glad that I can use my retired life to do something for my mother tongue. So, I feel this Hakka teaching job is very meaningful! (Doris, personal interview, June 22, 2006).

Doris further expressed that the meaningful aspect stemmed from her special feelings toward the Hakka children with whom she interacted:

I think this is just like the Hakka proverb, “Then fa lien phun, then tsii lien sun.” It means that if we love the flowers, we will love the flowerpot. Also, if we love our

children, we will love our grandchildren. I have these kinds of feelings! (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

Doris also felt it was meaningful to let Hakka children have a positive identity towards Hakka. Doris was very glad that some of her students had these positive feelings. Sometimes a few Hakka students in her class would chat with Doris after class; these kids wanted to talk in Hakka. During Doris' childhood, she did not feel proud of her own language and culture. But now, she says, some Hakka children do. Doris felt great about this.

After I went to teach Hakka and interacted with those children, I talked with them in Hakka and spoke about their hometowns. They were so happy! Then, they gradually felt that "I am a Hakka!" (in Hakka). I can intrigue these children to have an identity toward their ethnic group. I feel this job is very meaningful (Doris, personal interview, June 22, 2006).

After becoming involved in Hakka teaching, Doris gradually realized that her mother tongue—the Hakka language—was beautiful and full of abundant cultural meanings. Hakka language was not of low-class, as she thought before. She was glad that she had the opportunity to regain her culture. Doris explained,

I feel that this is my first time to truly understand my mother tongue and culture. I am very happy! Gradually, because I need to find information related to teaching, I know now that our Hakka not only have language, but we also have culture, and our own history. Also, I know that we Hakka have lots of proverbs that are interesting and full of wisdom (Doris, personal interview, June 22, 2006).

Doris began to realize that many Hakka proverbs were valuable. She began to think back to what her parents said about Hakka proverbs when she was little. Doris did not pay much attention to what they said at that time, but her interest had been rekindled.

I remember that my parents liked to use some Hakka proverbs when they were talking. For example, there are six children in our family. It was not easy to raise six children in those early days. I liked it when my father used one Hakka proverb:

“Khiung ngin m si to, liong teu mi voi tshong ko” (“People who are poor do not need to own too many things. They will sing happily even if they just have a little rice”). It means that contentment brings happiness. Now when I think back, I feel that what my father said is very meaningful. But in those days, I was very little; I didn’t pay attention to what my parents said. Now I have found that the Hakka proverbs were very deep in my parents’ minds. It’s very interesting to use the Hakka proverbs in daily life. So I found that Hakka language is very interesting and meaningful (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

Doris said she now had a different attitude toward her own identity. After teaching Hakka, she recognized herself as a Hakka.

In the past, when people mistakenly recognized me as a Mainlander, I felt very happy at that time. I didn’t deny it. But recently, when someone asked me, “What is your ethnic group?” I said, “I am a Hakka.” Then, he said, “Really? I just thought you were a Mainlander.” Then I said, “No, you are wrong. I am a Hakka” (Doris, personal interview, June 22, 2006).

Doris began to speak Hakka with her husband. Under Doris’ influence, her husband also began to learn Hakka. Doris expressed regret that she did not teach her children Hakka when they were little; now they have all grown up. However, Doris thought that maybe it was still not too late to let her sons learn a little Hakka. Therefore, she had begun to talk with her children in Hakka these past few years.

Helen entered the Hakka teaching field because of her daughter, who attended the school’s Hakka classes and was selected to participate in Hakka speech contests. Helen was a volunteer mother in her daughter’s school at that time. Helen and her daughter’s teacher worked together to prepare her daughter to participate in the Hakka speech contests. Later, her daughter’s teacher suggested that Helen become involved in Hakka teaching. So, Helen began to prepare for the Hakka language support teacher’s certification exam, and afterwards became a Hakka language support teacher.

Helen really liked her Hakka teaching job. After becoming involved in it, Helen

began to love her mother tongue and culture. She changed her attitude toward Hakka after she had contact with it. In the past, Helen had regarded Hakka as a language that was limited to being spoken only at home, and not a high-class language. She reflected:

I feel that my past thoughts were very childish. I now feel those kinds of thoughts are not right. In the past, I thought it was normal to talk in Mandarin, and very shameful to talk in Hakka. So, our Hakka is declining! Now I wonder why I thought that way in the past. Mother tongue is mother tongue. So, why did I feel ashamed of my mother tongue? (Helen, personal interview, May 22, 2006).

Helen thought the past Mandarin Movement highly influenced the Hakka language's decline. Helen said,

Overall, the Mandarin Movement had a great influence on our Hakka language. It let us feel that speaking Mandarin was higher class behavior. In those days, we felt that it was not very civilized to speak our mother tongue. I think our education taught us that speaking Mandarin was more civilized. Since only Mandarin was permitted to be spoken on campus, we began to dislike speaking Hakka. Just like me—I am a very typical example of many people my age. That is, we have given up our mother tongue and just speak Mandarin all the time. I blame the Mandarin Movement's influence (Helen, personal interview, May 22, 2006).

Helen learned to speak Hakka in a Si-hsien accent after she became involved in Hakka teaching. It was the same accent spoken by her mother. Helen felt she had been very immature in earlier years because she had laughed at her mother's Hakka accent. But she felt that the Si-hsien accent was beautiful after she began to learn it. She also began to be willing to talk with her mother in the Si-hsien accent. She described her different feelings:

I used to laugh at my mother's Si-hsien accent (big laughter). I feel that I was really childish before. Whenever my mother went back to her hometown to visit her family, she came back with a very obvious Si-hsien accent. So I always laughed at her by saying that the language she was speaking was very funny! But now, after I began to have contact with the Si-hsien accent, I found it is a very beautiful language. So, my attitude has changed. For me, I found that I changed a lot—totally changed! (Laughing). I used to laugh at the Si-hsien accent, but now I would like to learn it



deeply (Helen, personal interview, May 22, 2006).

Another change was that Helen never spoke Hakka with the vendors when she shopped in her village market. But now she would like to actively use Hakka to talk with people in her village. Helen reflected on herself as very much changed. Helen and her husband began to speak Hakka at home. In the past, they usually communicated in Mandarin. Now they communicate in both Mandarin and Hakka. Helen also began to speak Hakka at home and asked her children to speak it, too. Her little son asked Helen why:

Like my second child, I wanted him to participate in the Hakka speech contest. He asked me, ‘Why do I need to speak Hakka?’ (in a child’s tone). He asked me like this. Then I told him, ‘because our Hakka language is declining. If you don’t speak it now, you can’t teach your children in the future. We are Hakka, so it’s natural to speak our ethnic group’s language!’ I told my child like this (Helen, personal interview, May 22, 2006).

Then, her little son was persuaded to speak Hakka, and even participated in Hakka speech contests. Helen reflected that her daughter was the reason she began to have an awareness of revitalizing the Hakka language. Without the native language program in elementary school, Helen would never have thought about Hakka language as facing a declining situation. She thought about herself as belonging to the group of Hakka people who seldom speak Hakka all the time. It was after working with the native language program that her attitude toward her own ethnic language began to change. Helen thought that other Hakka people her age needed to have responsibilities to help revitalize and maintain the language, especially in actively speaking or teaching Hakka to their own children at home.

Flora’s involvement in Hakka teaching was also due to her children’s attending

elementary school. When Flora's daughter was in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, Flora volunteered to teach Hakka there because she could take care of her daughter at school. During the first year, she was a volunteer and taught one class in the morning. The second year, Flora passed an exam and officially became a Hakka language support teacher. She taught Hakka in two elementary schools; one of them, her daughter's. Most of Flora's time was spent there, where she could take care of her daughter, and at the same time do things related to Hakka teaching. Flora remembered that when she first began to teach Hakka, she was not confident about her Hakka capacity:

I was still afraid about speaking Hakka at that time. Although Hakka is my mother tongue, I can't speak it fluently, because I didn't speak Hakka for a long time (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

After entering the Hakka teaching field, Flora realized that the Hakka language, her mother tongue, was declining. She never thought about that before. Flora recalled,

In fact, before I entered the Hakka teaching field five years ago, I never thought it was useful to speak Hakka. I began to be aware of the decline of the Hakka language after entering the field. And then, later, I just realized that it's important to speak Hakka. The language will be really gone if we don't speak it anymore. If I don't speak it, I will have no chance to speak it (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Flora reflected on herself and her family's situation; she found that her generation and the next did not retain the Hakka language. Her parents did not ask her and her siblings to keep the language, and her relatives had a similar attitude. Flora did not speak Hakka with her own children, nor with her husband. Her nieces and nephews could not speak Hakka, either, because their mother is a Southern Min. Flora gradually realized that the Hakka language situation was very serious, and this also showed in her family:

After I began to teach Hakka, I realized the importance of speaking it. Because even my son can't speak Hakka; is it shameful? I feel ashamed! And I am a Hakka! I

didn't have this kind of awareness before. I just thought it doesn't matter whether I spoke Hakka or not. Just no need to speak it! People said the language is declining, then, so what? It's none of my business! But later, I just gradually realized that it really matters! (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

After becoming involved in Hakka teaching, Flora wanted to speak Hakka with her children at home. Flora's husband was also a Hakka, but he was not willing to speak the language. He thought English and Mandarin were more important than Hakka. Flora said,

Although my husband is also Hakka, he thinks it's very shameful to speak the language. After teaching Hakka five years ago, I began to try to speak it with him. But my husband has been wondering why I go to teach Hakka. He thinks I should teach English, not Hakka (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Flora began to teach her two young daughters Hakka after she became involved in Hakka teaching. Flora had three children. The oldest son was currently in senior high school. Flora did not teach her son Hakka when he was little, so he could not speak it. But during these past few years, Flora had begun to teach him. Now her son could understand a little Hakka. Her daughters were younger; one was in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and the other was in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Both of her daughters learned to speak Hakka within a few years after Flora began to teach Hakka in elementary school.

Flora explained that she was afraid to speak Hakka in front of people when she began to teach. She was not confident about her Hakka capacity. The fear was especially strong when she participated in the assembly of the Hakka Teachers' Association. Whenever she spoke one sentence in Hakka, some elderly person in the association would scold her by saying, "You can't speak Hakka very fluently. You had better not teach." That made Flora even more afraid to speak Hakka. But she tried very hard to think about how to teach. She designed actions to match each Hakka children's song. She

spent lots of time thinking about how to make her Hakka class interesting. Flora thought that, after these four years of teaching, her own Hakka capacity had improved greatly, compared to when she entered the field. She also already loved Hakka. Flora said,

Five years ago, when I became a Hakka language support teacher, I was not confident of my speaking ability, and I couldn't fully understand what it meant when people talked in Hakka. So I tried my best to improve my abilities in Hakka. Now, I know I have improved a lot! Now I feel like I speak better in Hakka. For example, I couldn't understand the Si-hsien accent before, and I didn't like to hear it, either. Now I can understand the Si-hsien accent about 70% or 80% of the time. I feel that I already love Hakka. I love to spend my time in anything related to my Hakka teaching! (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

After being involved in Hakka teaching, Flora would sometimes ask her mother about how to make some traditional Hakka food or things related to Hakka. She thought it was necessary to keep some traditions and she learned how to do them. Flora tried her best to learn, because she wanted to preserve the culture.

Sometimes I called my home to inquire about things related to Hakka. For example, once I asked my mother, "Mother, about the steamed rice dumpling, could you show me how to make it? I need to show it to my students." Also, for example, now that it's the Dragon Boat Festival, Hakka people need to hang certain things on the door, so I asked my mother where I could find these things. I often ask my mother about the Hakka customs and culture (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

For Flora, her involvement in heritage language teaching let her restore her Hakka identity. She was very proud to have opportunities to transmit the language and culture to the young generation in elementary schools.

Another teacher, Joan, taught Art Education in elementary school. A few years ago, one of Joan's colleagues asked her to instruct a student on how to participate in the Hakka speech contest. Joan found it very strange that her colleague was a Hakka but could not speak the language. Instead, she always spoke Southern Min. Among Joan's colleagues,

Joan found that few Hakka people could speak it well; some did not even like to admit they were Hakka. But Joan herself could speak the language very well. When Hakka classes opened in school, Joan actively sought to become a teacher. Therefore, alongside teaching Art Education, Joan became one of the three Hakka teachers in her school. The other two teachers were Hakka language support teachers. Each grade opened two classes for Hakka. Joan said that actually, the Hakka classes were very few, so most of the time, she taught Art Education. When asked why she wanted to teach Hakka at school, Joan said she had an awareness of being a Hakka. She thought that transmitting the Hakka language to the next generation would be a very meaningful mission for Hakka people her age. She had lots of experience with Hakka life in the village. Joan said,

I think people of my age need to do the language transmitting work. If we don't do it, nobody else will. Although the younger generation is encouraged to teach Hakka, their pronunciation is not very good. Usually they speak Hakka by directly translating from Mandarin. That is not very pure Hakka language. As for me, I have the kind of awareness to transmit Hakka. Also, I grew up in a typical Hakka village; I am very familiar with everything related to Hakka living. So, I can truly bring my students to the real Hakka life and let them learn this language (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

After becoming involved in Hakka teaching, Joan began to feel very proud of being a Hakka. In the past, she was afraid to admit that she was a Hakka.

Now I can proudly say that, "I am a Hakka," and I don't need to be afraid to let people know it (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

In the past, before entering the Hakka teaching field, she thought it was high-class behavior to speak Mandarin very well. But now she says:

I found that I have a great Hakka accent when I am speaking Mandarin now. I think it's because I ask myself to speak Hakka all the time. My Mandarin is not very standard anymore! (laughing) Now, whenever I speak, people can recognize that I am a Hakka (laughing). So, it's really due to the influence of the big environment. I

found that the change is very interesting! (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

Elizabeth had also never thought about teaching Hakka at school, but after teaching it, Elizabeth became proud of being a Hakka. She found that the Hakka spirit and many aspects of traditional Hakka culture were very good. These things could be found in her past living experience in her Hakka hometown. She also came to find these particular Hakka values in her family members. She was really proud of them. Elizabeth felt that the Hakka culture and mountain songs were very beautiful. She had never been aware of them before her involvement in Hakka teaching. Also, she prized the fact that she could speak two Hakka accents fluently. Elizabeth began to teach her children some Hakka after she began teaching it in schools. Elizabeth expressed regret that she did not teach them Hakka when they were little. Although now it was a little late, she thought she still could try to teach them some Hakka.

Similarly, another participant, Betty, also said she had a different attitude toward Hakka after her involvement in the Hakka teaching field. Betty was very proud of being a Hakka, its culture, and the Hakka spirit after entering this field. She has become more knowledgeable about Hakka after being involved in Hakka instruction.

After teaching Hakka, I just realized that, wow! I knew very little about Hakka before. I just could speak Hakka before. I didn't know much about my heritage, culture, and history before. After constantly being involved in this Hakka teaching job, I know more and more about Hakka stuff. I am so proud of being a Hakka after knowing our groups' language and culture (Betty, personal interview, May 27, 2006).

Betty said she really cherished her Hakka teaching job. She was very glad she could devote most of her time to her own heritage, language, and culture. Betty told me that although she needed to teach about 30 classes every week, she did not feel tired at all.

The reason was that she could transmit the language to the younger generation, and at the same time, she also earned a living by this meaningful job.

Greg had also become proud of being a Hakka and loved the language more since he started teaching it. He had found many traditional Hakka values in himself, including the fact that he persisted and worked hard toward his goal when he studied in college. Greg also asked his children to retain the language and some good aspects of the Hakka way of life.

Although common people did not have very positive perceptions toward the Hakka, Greg became more willing to admit his roots after he began teaching Hakka in elementary school. In his workplace, whenever there was an occasion, Greg would actively express that he was a Hakka. He said enjoys doing so, since there were so many positive and excellent aspects in Hakka culture and values.

After Greg became a Hakka teacher, he came to love to Hakka mountain songs and learned how to sing them. When I conducted the interview in his home, he showed me his collection of Hakka mountain songs on DVD and tapes. Also, he sang several Hakka mountain songs to me and asked if I felt he sang them well (Greg, interview field notes, June 6, 2006). Greg told me that he always thought of his Hakka hometown whenever he sang these songs. Teaching his students the related Hakka culture also helped him come back to his childhood memories. Greg loved his Hakka teaching work, and found it very meaningful.

## **Analysis**

We have seen that these teachers' involvement in the native language program enhanced their identity and awareness toward their own language and ethnic group. For the older participants (Greg, Alan, and Doris), teaching the students Hakka culture let them retrieve their own childhood memories. For the younger participants in this study (Joan, Helen, Flora, and Betty), teaching Hakka gave them a chance to know more about their own language and culture. These participants began to search for related information, making inquiries of their older family members, to find out about their culture. This further enhanced their Hakka identities. The implementation of the native language program promoted both the teachers' and children's Hakka identities.

The native language program also gave these participants a greater awareness of the decline of the Hakka language. Many of the participants came to love Hakka and gained pride in belonging to the culture. This supports Dorian's (1987) argument, that community and school support of a threatened language can mitigate the negative attitudes towards the language and its speakers. These attitudes typically accompany language decline, and have been internalized by speakers and potential speakers of the language (p. 64). Also, as Ericksen (1991) emphasized, language revitalization efforts are critically important for many minorities, in that they mark "the end of a long history of discrimination and stigmatization and the beginning of a new and positive identity" (Huss, 1997, p. 15).

In addition, from these participants' experiences, we see that the implementation of the native language program has its effect. Language revitalization efforts (in government,



school, student, and family) are going on. From Helen's case, we know that she was originally involved in this native program as a parent. But later, she eventually became a native language teacher. Helen's case agrees with Stiles (1997), who indicated that a successful language revitalization program has the characteristic of extending parental involvement in teacher certification. In the meantime, we also know that Helen changed her own attitudes toward her mother tongue and began to have awareness in speaking Hakka at home with her children and family members. This is a typical case (school, student, family). That is, the native language program has its effect first on the children, and then influences the children's families. Fishman's (1991) RLS theory stated that bringing the language back to the home is the ultimate goal of language revitalization. Furthermore, we know that some participants' involvement in the Hakka teaching field let them change their attitudes toward their language use at their home. For example, Flora, Doris, Helen, Elizabeth, and Betty began to speak Hakka with their family members. Therefore, the implementation of the native language program had its effect on these teachers themselves. The language revitalization efforts (the government, school, and family) are ongoing.

Furthermore, in Betty's case, we know that her being a Hakka led to her getting a teaching job in elementary school. Betty became a full-time Hakka language support teacher. This is an economic value for the effort in language revitalization and maintenance. As Spolsky (1978, p. 357) indicated, "One of the most important economic effects of a bilingual education program is in its potential for immediate benefit to the local community (in Dorian, 1987, p. 64). Economic benefits accrue to local communities

engaged in revitalization or maintenance efforts in the form of jobs for teachers, teacher-aides, teacher-trainers, curriculum and materials developers, and so forth (Cooper, 1989, p. 162).

### **Views toward Teaching and Students' Learning**

In the aspect of these participants' views toward their teaching and students' learning the native language, the first theme to emerge is the priority of motivating students' interest in learning the native language. Other themes include the importance of encouragement, the importance of Hakka culture and values, and emphasizing the practice of speaking and listening abilities.

### **The Importance of Motivating Students' Learning Interest**

All participants in this study thought that motivating students' interest in learning Hakka was the most important part of their Hakka instruction. This included employing a variety of instructional activities in their teaching, and the influence of teachers' personal attractions.

#### **A Variety of Instructional Activities**

In this study, these participants' teaching was mainly based on textbooks. The lessons were then matched to a variety of activities in class to create a fun, stress-free atmosphere. All teachers thought that using a variety of instructional activities in the class was necessary to motivate students' interest in learning this native language. Otherwise, they believed, students would quickly become bored in class. Overall, most instructional

activities were shared by participants in this study. Here, I review each participant's particular activities in his/her class.

Doris thought the concept of play was important in teaching Hakka. If students felt that the class was fun, they would have an interest in learning. Doris explained,

Let them (students) learn comfortably, and they will be interested. That is, you need to have the 'play' part. It is necessary to have some kind of interesting activities in this class. If the teacher just uses the traditional way to lecture them, students will have no interest (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

Doris let her students play while doing the review work. She would integrate the sentences that were included in the textbook. Then she asked her students to throw the Hakka sentences at the blackboard. When the student threw a sentence, he/she needed to be able to read it in Hakka. If the student could read it roughly, Doris would give him/her a prize. Doris described it:

It's interesting to teach children. Sometimes I just let them play. I'd buy something, such as sticky balls. For example, I pasted pictures or vocabulary cards on the blackboard, and then I asked students to stand in front of it. If I say one vocabulary word or one sentence, he/she just throws that sticky ball to the pictures or cards. Then I see if it's correct. Or I say one vocabulary word or one sentence, and the student throws the ball to the picture. Then I see if he/she throws to the right picture. Generally speaking, students think this is fun! They like to do this! (Doris, personal interview, June 22, 2006).

In addition, Doris said she was good at telling stories and found it to be a good way to intrigue her students:

For example, the students liked to listen to one song, 'a-ba zung gua, ngai ziid lo.' That is, 'Father grows watermelons; I knit the bamboo baskets.' First, I wrote down the text of the song on the blackboard. Then I began to tell the story. There was a little girl whose family was very poor. Her father grew watermelons to earn a living. The little girl was very good and helped her father knit bamboo baskets. She thought, 'If I knit the basket too big, then there will be too many watermelons in the basket and father would have to carry a very heavy load, which would not good for his health. But if I knit the basket too small, then watermelons can't be put in. Then,

Father would have no baskets to carry watermelons.’ Just like this. First I told my students about the situation of this song, and then I let them hear the song. My students seemed very interested in this story, and told me that that little girl was such a good girl. They liked that song very much! (Laughing) So, I think this way sometimes has an effect (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

Multimedia teaching was another feature Doris used to let her students have fun in class. She made good use of the DVDs that the Council for Hakka Affairs of Executive Yuan sent to elementary schools. These DVDs were spoken in Hakka. The contents were cartoons and children’s dramas. Doris usually found free time to let her students watch the videos. In her view, watching a DVD not only could train students’ listening ability in Hakka, but it was also entertaining.

Joan also thought teaching students to sing Hakka children’s songs was a great way for them to learn the language. Joan first drew pictures to describe the situation of the song, and then let her students imagine they were in that situation. That helped them understand the song and naturally know the feelings it expressed. She would teach her students about each Hakka vocabulary word, explaining its meaning. Then Joan would ask her students to use pencils or other available items to play the rhythms:

“Giung-zeu hiong, giung-zeu vong, van van siin-thi tshiong ngiet-kong. thai phin-ko, tshe ju thiam, fung-fung mien laui moi-moi tsiin siong-tshiong. Se-se mong-ko ab-lon iong, son- thiam mi-tho, pot-mung ja fi siong.”<sup>5</sup> This is just a very simple Hakka children’s song about fruit. I let my students use any available stationery to hit the rhythms. So, we sang the song together and beat the rhythms with pencils and water bottles. My students love to play these kinds of rhythmical activities. They had so much fun! (Laughing) (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

Joan said she usually used this method to motivate her students to learn. Most

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<sup>5</sup> A Hakka children’s song, which is about fruit. It means, “Yellow bananas smell so good, yellow bananas are yellow, the shape of the banana is just like the moon. Big apples taste sweet and crunchy. The big red apple is like my young sister’s lovely face. The little green mango is just like the duck’s eggs. Its sweet and sour flavor lets me keep thinking of it when I dream at night.”

students would learn to sing a song in one class, and during the next several classes, Joan helped her students review it. In her experience, students could learn to speak and listen to related Hakka words very quickly.

The particular characteristic of Ivy's teaching was integrating Hakka with other subjects. Ivy was a physical education teacher who also taught Hakka in her school. In her class, in addition to teaching the textbook, Ivy selected content from her students' Mandarin textbook and taught the children how to say those words in Hakka. Ivy said,

I use a very natural way to integrate Hakka into my teaching activities. In my Mandarin class, for example, I find some appropriate things, like in the poetry of the Tang Dynasty for 1<sup>st</sup> grade students, 'hong-dou sheng na guo, chuen lai fa ji zhi, chiuan jiun duo tsae shye, tsy wu tzuey shiang si' (The love bean tree grows in the south; they bear love beans in spring. I hope people will pick up some of these love beans, because they truly represent love). First I teach my students to read this poem in Mandarin; next I teach them to read it in Southern Min, and then in the Hakka version (Ivy, personal interview, June 21, 2006).

Ivy also described how she integrated Hakka into her students' activities. For example, in her physical education classes, she taught students some gymnastics songs. Students did the actions and sang at the same time. Ivy taught the songs in three languages—Mandarin, Southern Min, and Hakka. The students naturally learned Hakka. Ivy described,

For example, the calisthenics 'shi-cheau-shou,' which has ten stances, are for the exercise of the hands. Every stance is repeated 36 times. So, I told my students, 'Dear kids, please follow me in doing this! 1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8.9.10, 2.2.3.4.5.6.7.8.9.10, 3.2.3.4.5.6.7.8.9.10.' In the first few weeks, I taught them in Mandarin. After a few weeks, I taught them in Southern Min. 1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8 (in Southern Min). They read aloud and did the actions very happily. And then after another few weeks, I taught them in Hakka. 1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8. (in Hakka). My students also naturally repeated after me in Hakka. Just like this (Ivy, personal interview, June 21, 2006).

In a similar vein, Flora also thought that letting students have fun in Hakka class

was the most important thing. Flora wanted her students to feel that each class was a surprise to them, a class full of enjoyment and fun, not only limited to reading textbooks. Flora's previous experience with teaching English kindergarten helped her apply some of those concepts to her current Hakka class. Flora found that students liked to learn Hakka in game playing, singing songs, and TPR. She used interesting ways to let her students have a competition, so that students would speak up. Flora gave examples of how she did this:

While teaching the names of numbers, I let my students play 'finger songs,' for example, 'one, two, three, four, up, up, one, two, three, four, down, down.' I changed it to the Hakka version: 'yit, ngi, sam, si, song, song, song; yit, ngi, sam, si, ha, ha, ha; yit, ngi, sam, si, song lau ha; yit, ngi, sam, si, tai ga zeul!' ('One, two, three, four, up, up, up; one, two, three, four, down, down, down; one, two, three, four, up and down; one, two, three, four, everybody run!') While teaching the human body parts, I let students sing in Hakka, 'head, shoulders, knees, and toes.' Usually my students have a lot of fun! Sometimes when the bell rings to dismiss class, some students will say, 'Is class dismissed? So soon?' (Laughing) (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Flora thought that Hakka teaching for elementary school students needed to include some kind of physical activity in order to let students have fun and stay interested in their learning process.

Telling Hakka riddles and speaking Hakka slang to motivate students was a characteristic of Charles' teaching. Charles would find similar sentences in other languages, such as Mandarin and Southern Min, and then taught his students these sentences in Hakka. Charles thought Hakka teaching needed to be combined with students' other subjects. In this way, students would find learning Hakka more interesting and enjoyable.

Similarly, as we saw in the previous chapter, Alan, Betty, and Elizabeth also used a

variety of teaching activities to motivate their students to learn. Alan liked to tell his students Hakka jokes, and let them play with traditional Hakka toys. Betty intrigued her students' interest in Hakka by giving them hands-on activities to do. Elizabeth utilized game-playing, singing, and dancing activities to cultivate an enjoyable learning environment for her students.

### *Teachers' Personal Attractions*

Some participants in this study thought that a teacher's personal attraction was important to motivate students to come to Hakka classes. Teachers needed to attract students in elementary schools, where Hakka classes were electives, not compulsory.

Helen usually dressed herself in a very child-friendly way, since her students were mostly lower grade level. Helen thought it was very important to be familiar with children's language. Helen's style of talking also matched her students' styles.

Actually, elementary school students, especially the lower grade students, are very cute! I have great interactions with them. Whatever I teach, they accept. I feel very happy in my teaching. Usually I dress myself in a very lovely way! (Laughing) Also, when I am talking, I communicate with students in their language, just like children's language (Big laughter) (Helen, personal interview, May 22, 2006).

Helen saw the Hakka class as a very unattractive or unimportant class for most students. Teachers did not need to play a very serious role; otherwise students would not come to attend the class. Helen recalled an experience with a naughty 3<sup>rd</sup> grade boy in her class. Originally, that boy did not like to attend the class; he told Helen that he only came because his homeroom teacher wanted him to come. His homeroom teacher thought he would bother other students in the original classroom. So, the boy showed great impatience in Helen's class. He made lots of noise by beating on the desk or chairs. Helen

tried her best to understand that child. Later, she found out that the boy liked to play drums, and showed her interest by talking about them with the boy after class was over. Once Helen also let him play the drums in front of the whole class. In addition, when she taught Hakka children's songs, Helen let the boy help count the rhythm. Helen recalled that gradually that boy came to love her class, and even came early. He told Helen that learning Hakka was very fun.

In Ivy's view, Hakka teachers encountered a situation that was unlike Southern Min teachers. Southern Min was the majority group language, and most students would select Southern Min as their native language class. However, Hakka was different. Generally, the number of students selecting Hakka class was very small. Being a Hakka teacher, Ivy thought it was really necessary to pay attention to how to attract students to this class. Ivy thought teachers needed to understand children's minds. Ivy gave an example about how she had good rapport with her students. She knew her students were fascinated with the little decorations sold in convenience stores and liked to collect them. So Ivy used these little decorations to encourage her students. When they paid attention in her class, they would be rewarded with a decoration. Her students were very eager to comply. Ivy said this was a "language" between teachers and students, which teachers needed to know. In Ivy's experience, her students wanted to learn what she teaches them in Hakka class because they liked her. The reason was simple. Ivy said, "Because they like me, they will repeat after me, and learn with me" (Ivy, personal interview, June 21, 2006).

As described in the previous chapter, Betty and Elizabeth both emphasized teachers' personal attractions in making their students want to learn Hakka. Before buying prizes to



encourage their students' learning, these teachers tried hard to learn what their students liked. Elizabeth stressed the great importance of being a fashionable and humorous Hakka teacher.

### **The Importance of Encouragement**

All participants in this study believed that the Hakka language was in the beginning step of revitalization, so encouragement was very important in their interactions for students' leaning. Types of encouragement included both spoken and material encouragement. These participants gave their students a variety of prizes. In general, the teachers spent their own money to buy prizes for their students, although the salary for teaching the native language was low. The parctipants in this study thought they could increase students' confidence and interest in learning their native language.

Doris always encouraged her students to participate in class. She used a reward method, which helped her students really want to participate in the class activities. She designed a system by herself:

Before each class was dismissed, I usually asked students if they could read the text or vocabulary in the textbook. If so, I would give a reward card. Behind the reward card is two-sided adhesive tape, so students could paste it in their textbooks. I told them that if they got 5 reward cards, to remember to tell me. Then I would prepare the gifts and let them draw lots; they could get a mystery gift for the next class meeting time. You can't tell them that they need to collect 10 reward cards, and then draw lots—because it takes so long. Then they will lose interest in participating in this activity. So, (laughing) you had better not let them wait too long! (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

The presents for students who drew lots included toys or candy. Doris usually told her students that this little prize represented the teacher's heart, although it was not very

expensive or a great present. Sometimes, Doris also gave students some kind of tasty candy if they were willing to speak up when Doris asked a question.

I gave them like this kind of little thing and said, ‘Don’t forget to rinse your mouth after you eat it!’ (Laughing) The kids would be very happy! I just think that, for kids, it is not necessary to mean to them. The most important thing is that they have the willingness to speak, to learn this language (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

In Doris’ view, children needed encouragement all the time. Usually on the weekends, Doris would go to the store to select and buy a variety of presents as rewards for her students. Doris remembered a Southern Min teacher who knew that Doris spent time and money in buying the presents for children. He asked Doris, “Is it worth it? You only get NT \$ 320 (about \$10 U.S. dollars) for each class!” Another interesting thing was that Doris’ students thought she was rich. Doris recalled one child asking, “Teacher, the Hakka teachers are very rich, right?” Doris replied that she regarded them as her own grandchildren; she just wanted to encourage them to learn this language and give them an interest in learning Hakka.

Doris’ concept of encouragement also showed in the grades she gave to students. She usually tested her students after they finished one lesson in the textbook. Doris did not demand that students pronounce vocabulary words or sentences absolutely correctly. She evaluated her students on the speaking and listening parts related to the content of the textbook. If students could roughly read the content or answer the questions, and they paid attention in class, Doris would give them grades that satisfied them.

Doris also recalled a method she adopted to encourage students to study hard for their mid-term exam. She told her students that if they had good grades in their other

main subjects, they would earn a reward card. Also, because studying hard was one main characteristic of Hakka culture, her students were very pleased to do so. Therefore, they felt like participating in her Hakka class activities.

One teacher in the school said that Doris gave very high grades to the students, compared to the Southern Min teachers (Southern Min was mainly taught by the homeroom teacher). Doris recalled her response and her thinking:

I told him that our Hakka class is different from Southern Min. Southern Min classes don't need any special incentives, because their population is very large. We just want to encourage students to come to learn our Hakka, because Hakka is the minority. There is no need to give them (students) low grades! We don't need to be strict in that way. My attitude is that they just like this kind of encouragement. I believe that if they (students) can come to Hakka class and have the willingness to learn the language, no matter whether they speak it well or not, their grades will be not too bad. I think the students will feel they have accomplished something (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

In addition to teaching Hakka in elementary school, Doris was also eager to participate in some related Hakka activities held by the local government or big companies. If there were these kinds of Hakka activities, Doris would tell her students. As a Hakka teacher, she thought it was necessary to let students know this information. If students wanted to participate, their parents would accompany them, creating some influence in the family's aspect. Doris explained,

I usually encourage them to join in these activities. I told them (laughing), 'You will get a little gift if you go there. I will give you a very special little gift!' (Big laughter) Kids are just like this. They need some kind of incentive. I know that if kids can go to this kind of activity, their parents will accompany them. This is a very rare situation. I just think, although there are very few of these situations, that there is still hope! (Doris, personal interview, June 22, 2006).

Helen also used small gifts and oral praise to encourage her students to participate in class activities. She usually reviewed the previous lesson's contents at the beginning of

her class. At the same time, she asked her students some questions. Students would be rewarded with small gifts or oral encouragement from Helen if they answered the question well. She expressed that this was a very good way to boost student participation in learning activities:

Students would have more interest because of these small gifts. They (students) would pay more attention to what I was asking, because they were really looking forward to those little gifts. They would wonder, 'Later, what kinds of gifts will the teacher will give me?' (Laughing) Just like this! Just like these kinds of little things! Those little gifts are helpful in motivating their learning interest. I think this is very important! Gifts such as pencils, little dolls, lovely toys, just like these things. Children like that stuff. Those things are not very expensive, but children will feel, 'This is what the teacher gave me,' and they will be very happy (Helen, personal interview, May 22, 2006).

Helen sometimes forgot to prepare the small gifts for the class, and then she usually asked the whole class to give the student who answered the question well an 'encouragement of love.'

I will ask the child to stand up and accept other children's 'encouragement of love.' It is spoken in Hakka, 'yit, ngi, yit, ngi, sam, ho-he!' ('One, two; one, two, three; one, two, three, four, ho-he!') While they say this, they also match their hand actions to the words. Just like this. Children will learn to speak the numbers from one to ten in Hakka. In this way, they will learn to speak these numbers very naturally (Helen, personal interview, May 22, 2006).

Based on Helen's experience, her students usually felt they had accomplished something, and they enjoyed participating in class activities.

Elizabeth and Betty both emphasized the importance of giving encouragement as they taught. As described in the previous chapter, Elizabeth constantly used oral encouragement to help students develop confidence in speaking up. Betty found that collecting reward stamps helped interest her students in classroom learning activities; she also adopted flexible methods to evaluate her students' learning outcomes.

Greg, Alan, and Flora used their encouragement mainly in the aspect of students' speaking. They thought that if students wanted to speak, it was not necessary to demand that they speak very correctly. Their goal was to let students feel comfortable and help them have an enjoyable experience in Hakka class. Alan said,

Like in your daily life, who will correct your pronunciation? Who will demand that your pronunciation be very standard? I think the only thing is for people to understand what you are talking about! Language is only for communication. It's just a tool. If students can't understand what I am talking about, I just try to let them understand. If they can't speak, I just try to teach them to speak. Then, it's okay! So we just need to remember that our goal in teaching is for children to be willing to speak up (Alan, personal interview, May 25, 2006).

Greg also thought that encouragement was very important when interacting with students in class. He said that when children had difficulties in speaking, it was really necessary to have a supportive attitude toward them. He gave an example of how he dealt with some students' situations:

For example, many students can't pronounce the word 'thau no' (brain). Some kids just can't say that word very well. So, I told them, 'Never mind! The most important thing is that you roughly know how to pronounce it. Maybe you can do it better later.' I told them that. If you always correct their pronunciation, they (students) will feel very frustrated. Then they will have no interest at all (Greg, personal interview, June 2, 2006).

Greg said that students would try harder to speak and had more confidence in learning this native language if they did not feel criticized.

### **Analysis**

In Taiwanese elementary schools, the Hakka language class was unlike students' other classes. Hakka was an elective, not a compulsory subject. The students themselves decided whether to select this class or not. Unless students had an interest in learning this

language, they would not choose this class.

Therefore, the participants knew that motivating students' interest toward this native language is imperative, and that using a variety of instructional activities was a key to success. The teachers' motivational activities all had a common trait: They all let students have fun in Hakka class. This idea corresponds to findings by Hinton (2001a), who stressed that activities, active physical work, and games related to the vocabulary or phrases being learned help the learning process in many ways, by making it more interesting, keeping up the attention level, associating words with actions, and so on. The study's participants said that creating a relaxed and enjoyable Hakka class for their students was important in motivating their interest in learning. This is in line with Krashen and Terrell (1983), who emphasized that language classroom activities must not put any kind of stress on the students to perform beyond their capabilities.

Teachers found that encouragement was important for motivating students to keep learning this native language. In this study, teachers used external incentives (rewards, gifts, and prizes) to encourage their students' learning both in and outside their classes. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) indicated that often children—and adults —need external incentives to take the first steps in an activity that requires a difficult restructuring of attention. Most enjoyable activities are not natural; they demand an effort that initially one is reluctant to make. But once the interaction starts to provide feedback to the person's skills, it begins to be intrinsically rewarding.

These teachers' views on the importance of encouragement for their students' native language learning are in line with what Hinton (2001a) stressed in teaching

endangered languages. Hinton stated that criticism discourages learners from speaking and participating, thus discouraging them from learning. Praise and positive forms of correction enhance the learning process. In addition, Supahan and Supahan (2001), in their use of communication-based instruction (CBI) in the classroom, emphasized that encouragement is vital for students' learning. In addition, assessment can take many forms and may be an ongoing process. In sum, the participants in this study thought that the instructor should play an encouraging and supportive role in students' native language acquisition.

### **Emphasizing the Practice of Speaking and Listening**

According to the study participants, the first step for transmitting Hakka to elementary school students was to develop their speaking and listening abilities. The aim was to let students have basic competency in communicating in Hakka in their daily life. These teachers emphasized the need for repeated practice in listening and speaking the Hakka vocabulary and textbook content—the “practice makes perfect” principle. All participants in this study thought that letting students become familiar with listening to this target language was the best way to develop their abilities. They used common classroom words in Hakka in order to familiarize students with the language. In this way, they believed students would gradually come to speak in Hakka. The participants thought it was not currently necessary to ask students to write in Hakka, because there was not common agreement about some of the words.

Charles believed that cultivating a student's listening ability was the most important

thing in his Hakka instruction:

I think listening is the most important! Repeating is necessary in the short 40 minutes of class. Practice can let children become familiar with this language. Children of this age have brains that are just like blank tapes. If we keep talking with children in Hakka, they have a chance to listen to this language and form an impression about it. Children in elementary school are in their golden learning period, so teachers need to talk in Hakka with children all the time. It is necessary to teach them the numbers in Hakka, and some daily conversation. For example, What's your name? What are your parents' names? Where do you live? These are very basic questions. It's necessary to let students practice over and over. Repeated practice can make an impression, and then their listening abilities can be improved (Charles, personal interview, June 20, 2006).

Similarly, for Joan, Doris, and Helen, the concept of “practice makes perfect” was important in cultivating students' listening abilities. In their classes, they let students repeatedly hear the common classroom words in Hakka to develop their listening abilities; it was also the rule in their classes. Joan said,

Students' listening abilities need to be developed slowly. It takes time. In the beginning, they can't understand what I am talking about. For example, I said, 'khon go loi' ('look here'). They would say, 'What?' Then I told them the meaning in Mandarin. After a period of time, they naturally understood what I was talking about. I repeatedly speak with them, and they gradually come to understand many words and sentences over time (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

Some common classroom words included simple commands in Hakka, such as, “khon go loi” (look here), “tsu i thang a” (pay attention to my words), “ho m ho?” (Okay or not okay?). For some simple greeting words, at the beginning of each class, the student leader loudly gave the command “ki hi loi” (stand up), “hang li” (salute), and then the whole class would greet the teacher “sien sang tso” (Good morning, Teacher) or “sien sang ho” (Good day, Teacher). When the bell rang, the students needed to say “sien sang, An zii se” (thank you, Teacher). Participants said these phrases were the most basic part of their Hakka classes. Joan also strictly asked her students to speak only Hakka in class;



otherwise they would keep talking in Mandarin and Southern Min.

Flora also emphasized the need to repeatedly acquaint students with the common classroom words in Hakka. She said,

My students can probably understand some of my classroom commands. I always emphasize basic conservation with them. I ask them to repeat these basic things in every class, for practice. I think they can understand after so much repetition, and then they can speak. For example, 'se lai e, ki hi lo' (stand up, boys), 'se moi e, ki hi lo' (stand up, girls), 'dai ga ki hi lo' (everyone stand up), 'mun mun thi' (ask questions), and so on. After class, they need to say, 'zang loi liau!' (Goodbye), 'an zii se, sien sang' (Thank you, Teacher). When they come to class, they need to say, 'sien sang ho.' These are very basic words. And when I ask 'voi' or 'mo voi' (can and can't), they need to answer me by saying, 'voi' (can) or 'mo voi' (can't). I constantly emphasize these things in my class (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Betty also thought that developing students' listening was her first priority. Betty had her students repeatedly listen to certain vocabulary words from the textbook. In addition, she also often used vocabulary flash cards to help her students to review certain words.

Elizabeth, too, emphasized the importance of training students' listening and speaking abilities. Besides using common classroom commands, she planned interesting activities for reviewing vocabulary words and sentences. In addition, she asked her students to become familiar with their names in Hakka.

Similarly, Greg agreed that developing students' listening and speaking abilities was important for teaching Hakka. In addition to letting students practice certain words, Greg recorded the Hakka vocabulary taught in class. Then he distributed these tapes to his students, to let them have a chance to listen at home. The school provided the tapes as part of government funding for teaching materials and related facilities. Greg could freely

use these facilities in the school where he worked. He also found that using some common classroom words in Hakka was necessary. He thought it was enough if his students could remember these simple Hakka greeting words:

When students come to class each time, at first, I greet them in Hakka. Some of my students can also greet me in Hakka, too (he smiled). I think this is great! I was happy that they could remember this simple sentence, ‘sien sang tso’ (Good morning, Teacher). In the class, I use some common commands. For example, ‘ki hi lo’ (stand up), ‘co ha loi’ (sit down), ‘co ho’ (sit well), ‘ha ko e’ (class dismissed), just like all of these common words. Let students become familiar with listening to this language. If students can learn to speak these common words, then I am satisfied (Greg, personal interview, June 2, 2006).

In addition to the common classroom words, Alan and Charles also applied their classroom management rules in Hakka to familiarize students with hearing the language. They stated that students could be more easily to get used to Hakka language in this way.

Charles mentioned that his classroom management rules were all spoken in Hakka. He thought that was a good way to teach the common words in Hakka. For example, one of Charles’ rules was “shi-vud ngi-m den-e, den-e ngi-m ti-ngi” (“hips stick to chairs, chairs stick to the floor”). Charles taught that phrase because some children in his class were very naughty, walking or running around the classroom while Charles conducted his lesson. So, Charles set a rule to ask students to sit in their own chairs and desks, showing another good way to let students become familiar with Hakka language.

As described in the previous chapter, Alan also applied his classroom management rules in Hakka. He used humorous ways to deal with students who had discipline problems in the classroom, and familiarized his students with hearing words that are usually spoken between close friends.

## **Analysis**

These participants stressed that for maintaining and revitalizing Hakka, the first step was to develop students' listening and speaking abilities in the language. For them, speaking and listening abilities were the basis for conducting daily communication. Once young students acquired some abilities in communicating in this native language, teachers would have taken a big step toward transmitting the native language to the young generation. Restricted to a limited learning time, these participants put great emphasis on letting students review the vocabulary and textbook content. They tried to cultivate a favorable learning environment and let their students get used to classroom commands in Hakka. From the interviews, we appreciate these native language teachers' hard work in helping developing students' listening and speaking abilities. Their efforts toward teaching the native language are worthy of praise.

However, these participants also pointed out that their students' learning outcomes were very limited. In general, most of their students still lacked abilities to conduct basic communication in Hakka—except for students who lived with their Hakka-speaking grandparents, and a few students whose parents had a supportive attitude toward their learning this native language. These teachers thought the problem was due to students' lack of opportunities to practice what they learned in classroom. After students left the school, there was no environment for speaking Hakka. Therefore, most students only had contact with Hakka during this class time (40 minutes a week). As Fishman (1991) indicated, the task of fostering native language still requires extensive and recurring pre-school, out-of-school, and post-school societal reinforcement (p. 372). The task of

maintaining and revitalizing the native language cannot rely only on the school. Hence, how to let students have more exposure and opportunities to practice what they learn in their classes is the current challenge.

### **The Importance of Hakka Culture and Values**

In addition to teaching the contents of the textbook, all participants in this study thought that integrating the Hakka culture into their instruction played an important role. This culture included the Hakka lifestyle, eating habits, clothes, houses, transportation, and entertainment. Teachers should let students know a little about the Hakka history, culture, and values. As Joan said,

In my Hakka class, I usually combined textbooks and culture. I not only talked about things in the textbook, but also extended them through lots of cultural examples (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

These participants told their students things about Hakka people's daily living styles whenever they related to the context of the textbooks. Also, when the time came for traditional festivals, the related Hakka customs were explained to students. These festivals included Chinese New Year, Tomb-Sweeping Day, Dragon Boat Festival, Moon Festival, and Winter Solstice Festival. Teachers told their students how Hakka customs differ from other ethnic groups' culture. For example, Joan recalled one example of how she integrated the Hakka festivals into her teaching:

When Winter Solstice Festival was coming, I taught my students to sing, 'tung tsiet to, no ban yen, tung tsiet to, no ban yen, no to dai ga dai thon yen, ko tung tsiet, no ban yen, no to Hakka yen yen yen'<sup>6</sup> (singing). I let my students make balls of

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<sup>6</sup> "Winter Solstice Festival is coming. Let's make the balls of glutinous rice together! Winter Solstice Festival is coming. Let's make the balls of glutinous rice together! We Hakka people all get together to

glutinous rice and sing this song at the same time. After making the food, students could eat. So, they could understand the process of making ‘Hakka ban yen.’ Students can eat, play, and understand the customs of this seasonal festival. (Laughing) My students love to do these activities a lot! (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

In Joan’s view, life was culture. Joan said she usually integrated Hakka people’s daily living styles into her teaching whenever something was applicable.

Betty’s lessons feature the Hakka way of life. “Generally speaking,” she said, “my teaching includes Hakka culture. I think this is the most ordinary thing. I usually keep thinking about how to integrate Hakka people’s lifestyles into my teaching” (Betty, personal interview, July 5, 2006). As described in the previous chapter, in order to illustrate Hakka living to her students, Betty brought cultural items to her classroom. She often used photography to introduce her students to the old Hakka agricultural village lifestyle.

When I conducted Flora’s interview, she showed me the classroom that her school had arranged especially for her Hakka classes. The decoration was all related to Hakka culture (Flora, interview field notes, June 15, 2006). The desk was covered by traditional Hakka cloth. The bulletin board was full of pictures of the traditional Hakka living style. On the wall, Hakka proverbs and sayings were written on big colored posters. Several samples of sachets made of traditional Hakka cloth sat on Flora’s desk. Flora told me that her students would learn how to make sachets according to these samples, because the Dragon Boat Festival was coming soon. These cultural handicrafts let Flora’s students have fun in her class; at the same time, they gave students some understanding about

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make the balls of glutinous rice together.”

Hakka culture. She said:

I think it's necessary to transmit the good aspects of Hakka culture to the next generation. I usually emphasize culture during my teaching, because every language has its culture. Also, it's impossible for students to quickly learn a language well. Putting in the cultural aspects makes the class vivid, interesting, and more related to daily life. Students will easily accept things in this way. If I always teach them only about language, they will feel very bored! (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Greg introduced his students to sin Hakka mountain songs. He said that because Hakka mountain songs were the main entertainment of the traditional Hakka life style, he wanted his students to understand them. He taught the origins of the songs and let students listen to some traditional ones. Although some students told Greg that these songs sounded very old and were not related to their daily life, Greg told them that he just wanted them to appreciate the beauty of the traditional Hakka entertainment. Greg also learned how to sing the Hakka mountain songs, so he sang to his students and explained the meanings. His students later came to love to hear him sing these Hakka mountain songs.

Some participants used themselves as examples of the Hakka culture. Elizabeth brought Hakka women's clothes to school to let her students know what the traditional dress was like. Betty and Helen also dressed this way to let their students clearly know they were Hakka teachers. They said that some stores now sold an improved variety of Hakka clothes, so it was easy to represent Hakka life.

In addition, these participants thought it was necessary to clear the misunderstandings and stereotypes of Hakka. For instance, Flora strongly emphasized in the importance of clarifying others' ideas about Hakka people and food. She explained,

I told my students why Hakka food in the old days was so salty. Originally, Hakka

people in the village were poor. If the more expensive foods were salty, they could be eaten with more rice. You know, because they had very limited money for preparing lots of food, they needed to make the main course salty so that small portions could be eaten. I told my students the reason for the common impression about salty Hakka food, because I wanted them to know its origin. Its positive meaning is the concept of frugality. I want my students to know this concept, so it can be transmitted to the young generation. Actually, it's a very good virtue. I told my students not to waste things. Also, Hakka were very smart, even if they were not rich. The origin of 'ci ba' came from the worry about what they would prepare for dessert when guests visited their houses. They got an idea to use sweet rice, and added sugar and peanuts—then it became a delicious dessert. You see, Hakka people are very smart, right? I want my students to know all of these good aspects of Hakka culture (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Similarly, another participant, Greg, said that giving students an understanding of Hakka culture contributed to their appropriate perceptions toward Hakka. To explain to his students why Hakka food was so salty, Greg told about his early days in a Hakka village. He said that because Hakka people were not rich, farmers worked hard on their farms. They tended to make food saltier in order to gain more strength. Greg said he often made use of his childhood to let his students know the reasons and origins of stereotypes.

#### *Hakka Virtues and Values*

In addition to transmitting general cultural aspects, all participants saw the need to impart the more spiritual aspects of Hakka to their students. These included the spirit of persistence, diligence, frugality, emphasis on studies/education, and the importance of good character. The teachers held these spiritual aspects of Hakka life to be very precious and valuable. They strongly believed it was necessary to let their students know, maintain, and preserve the good aspects of Hakka culture.

Elizabeth felt that integrating the Hakka spirit into her teaching was very important, because it represented the good characteristics of Hakka people. She saw teaching songs

in Hakka as a good way to transmit this spirit. Usually she would explain the meanings of the songs in Mandarin first, and then taught her students to sing. Her students really liked to sing these songs.

Emphasizing the importance of education was one characteristic of Hakka culture these participants thought their students should know. For example, Greg told his students about his own personal experience in pursuing his degree:

The spirit of diligence is very obvious in my past experience. I told my students that I was in the military for three years. Except for the ordinary training of being a soldier, there was nothing to do but watch TV and read the newspaper. Then I decided that I needed to improve my knowledge, so I studied English and math on my own. Other people just made use of their leisure time by playing and chatting, but because I wanted to improve myself, I worked hard on my skills/knowledge/abilities. After the military, I passed the university exam and became a college student. During my college life, when my other classmates were busy dating and playing, I was studying. I lived in dormitories, classrooms, and restaurants. After graduating from college, I quickly got a very good job. So, I told my students that people need to work hard to achieve their goals. 'Diligence' is a very good virtue in our Hakka culture. I want my students to know this virtue and put it into practice in their lives (Greg, personal interview, June 2, 2006).

Similarly, Alan thought it was necessary to teach students to have good character. Alan believes that Hakka virtues and values are full of meaning in modern society. These qualities seem to be almost forgotten by people today, but Hakka culture emphasizes them. Alan found every chance to teach his students about good character. He explained,

The moral and character of a person are very important! Nowadays society is in disorder, unlike in the old days. Many people who have a good education will still commit crimes. We Hakka emphasize the importance of not only studies, but good character. I told my students that among our Hakka people, the crime rate is very low. For example, I told my students a joke: One day I went back to my hometown to visit my family. A policeman there asked me if he could fine me, and he would pay me the fine, because there was not any criminal behavior there (laughing). I also make use of my class time to teach my students character education. I think it is necessary to teach that to students. This is what our Hakka culture emphasized (Alan, personal interview, June 8, 2006).



Charles liked to tell his students stories of great people in Hakka history. He saw this as an important part of his Hakka instruction, as a way for students to enhance their Hakka identity. In these great people's stories, Hakka characters and virtues could be expressed. In addition to intriguing the children's sense of cultural identity, these great people in history provided role models for students to emulate.

Some participants especially emphasized the importance of using Hakka proverbs and slang to explain particular Hakka cultural values to their students. For example, Doris liked to teach her students Hakka proverbs because they express a lot about the meaning of life in Hakka philosophy. She gave an example:

Usually when I introduce Hakka proverbs, I write them on a poster. I introduce several proverbs at a time and give some examples for each. I may ask, 'Which proverb is used for the situation I just mentioned?' Then students will answer the question. This can enhance their impressions of these Hakka proverbs. For example, 'tsia tshien seu mi mi, tho tshien tsa mo tsii.'<sup>7</sup> I told my students that they needed to be careful when someone wanted to borrow some money from them. Some people pretend to be nice when they want to borrow money, but when the lender wants to get paid back, the person pretends he didn't borrow anything. I also told my students that they had better not to bring lots of money to school. Just like this (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

Doris often introduced Hakka proverbs to explain the philosophy related to their daily lives. Doris thought that the teacher's responsibility was not restricted only to transmitting knowledge, but also to prepare students to become good citizens in society. She believed that many Hakka proverbs were helpful in cultivating students' characters and virtues. Her students felt that learning them was interesting and meaningful,

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<sup>7</sup> Some people smiled when they borrowed money from other people, and when asked to return the money, they pretended they did not borrow the money.

according to Doris.

### **Analysis**

All participants emphasized the importance of including and integrating the culture as part of their instruction. This is in line with the value of learning the native language: Preserve the culture, preserve the heritage. As Dorian (1987) indicated, one value of language promotional efforts is that they help transmit the ethnic history and traditional lifeways, which are typically threatened along with the language: “The self-awareness and self-confidence which can be gained through the recovery of such information have value in themselves” (p. 64). Fishman also indicated that schools serve in:

enriching their students’ attitudinal and overt-implementation commitments to language, by providing and stressing the historical, cultural, and moral rationales for such commitments. By repeatedly implementing and activating its associated culture, and by doing so with positive affect, a language creates a social bond between the community of users of that language and its historically associated culture, symbolism, and identity (p. 372).

Similarly, Stiles (1997) also concluded that successful programs need to link language and culture. Programs need to develop curriculum that combines indigenous language and cultural instruction. Language is learned as a by-product of the cultural heritage.

In addition, the participants in this study felt it necessary to clear the misunderstandings and stereotypes the public commonly holds about the Hakka. Stigmatized by these prejudices, many Hakka people do not want to admit their Hakka identities. Kulick (1994) cites the importance of the role of ethnic identity in language shift. He states that ethnic identity, or “the way in which the expression of positive and

highly valued aspects of the self comes to be bound to expression through a particular language,” is the most crucial factor influencing the rate and finality of language shift (p. 7). He further explains that language is an important marker of ethnic identity. Attachment to language is as strong as people’s regard of themselves as a social group, which is influenced greatly by how the larger society regards them. A negative ethnic identity contributes to the low prestige of the ethnic group’s language, which in turn makes the group more susceptible to shifting to a high-prestige language. Currently, the implementation of the native language program in school provided an opportunity to let students have a better understanding about the culture embodied in certain native languages. Along the same lines, some participants in this study thought it would help Hakka children have a better understanding of their own culture and enhance their Hakka identity. For children who were not Hakka-oriented, the program would also help them have a positive understanding about the Hakka culture.

### **Encouraging/frustrating Factors**

With regard to the factors that encouraged or frustrated these participants’ native language teaching and views, themes that emerged included students’ motivation to learn, parents’ cooperation and attitudes, school cooperation, and other implementing activities.

### **Students’ Motivation to Learn**

#### **Characteristics of the Hakka Class**

Before discussing the aspect of students’ willingness to learn the native language,

some understanding about the characteristics of the Hakka class is necessary. In these participants' schools, students who selected Hakka went to one particular classroom, while students who selected Southern Min stayed in their original classroom. In some schools where these participants taught, if the number of students who selected Hakka was very small, students of several grades would be merged into a class. For example, Greg taught three classes in his school. The first and second graders became one class; third and fourth graders formed another class; and fifth and sixth graders made up another class. Similarly, Doris' classes were also in this same situation. All participants said the students were not easy to calm down while in the Hakka class because they came from different classes, and even different grades. As Doris said,

There is really a great difference between the Southern Min class and Hakka class. A lot of difference! Students who select Southern Min stay in their original classroom, unlike in Hakka classes, where students come from different classrooms. Every student's aim for coming to the Hakka class is different! If students are from the same classroom, and the same grade, the learning effect will be better. So, in fact, (sighing) it is really not easy to teach Hakka (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

As these participants compared the Southern Min class with the Hakka class, they felt that the learning effect of Hakka class was less. Students who learned Southern Min stayed in their original classrooms with their homeroom teachers. No disruptions occurred due to transition time.

According to these participants, Hakka teachers had a more difficult time because Hakka classes only met once each week. As a result, classroom management was a challenge for most participants in this study, including both classroom teachers and Hakka language support teachers.

Although the teachers all tried hard to learn and improve their classroom management skills, they said the challenge of facing the problems still frustrated them in their Hakka teaching. They observed that most students had more respect for their own homeroom teachers. Students generally did not respect other subject teachers very much. In addition, because the native language class was not a main subject for tests, students did not pay as close attention to learning. Overall, the participants thought students did not care about what the teachers said in class. As a result, there were often discipline problems in the Hakka classes.

#### *Students' Motivation to Learn*

Greg talked about his frustration because some students' motivation to learn was not high. As schools needed to open native language classes according to the policy of the Ministry of Education, some students just came to Hakka class to kill that time. They took a perfunctory attitude toward this class. These students regarded this class as a routine, but without care or interest. Greg described the problem:

I feel that some students just come to this class to take a rest or relax. As for whether they learn well or not, they seem not to care at all! Whenever I told them to do something, they didn't pay attention to my words. For example, I told one boy, 'Now turn to page two.' He didn't listen to me. He didn't turn to page two (He sighs). He just sat there and did nothing! So I could feel that he really didn't want to learn. I said again, 'fan-ko-loi (turn the page).' He still did not take any action. Finally, I walked up beside him and turned the page for him (Greg, personal interview, June 2, 2006).

Greg's powerlessness showed on his face when he talked about this incident. He told me that sometimes he felt very frustrated about certain students' leaning situations. At times he felt that it was not worthwhile to spend his time teaching Hakka and preparing teaching materials (Greg, personal interview field notes, June 2, 2006).

Alan also talked about his frustration with many students' low motivation to learn Hakka. Alan could detect this fact from his students' textbooks, because most of these books were as good as new at the end of the semester. He did say that a few students worked hard, Alan felt that in general, most of his students did not pay much attention to learning Hakka and did not practice outside of class. Alan described some of his students' learning situations:

Some kids even didn't open their textbooks until it was nearly time to dismiss class. Even though I asked them to open the textbook, they still didn't want to open it. They just sat there! Or some kids, although they opened the textbooks, didn't know what pages we were reading. Just like this situation. So, you think they can learn well? That's impossible! So, I know their leaning effect from these situations. We are very clear about that. Actually, the learning effect is very limited! (Alan, personal interview, June 8, 2006).

Charles felt that because the Hakka class was an elective rather than a required subject, most students did not pay much attention to learning. Charles said the students' low willingness to learn showed in their being late for class and disrupting once they got there. Charles usually spent ten out of the 40 minutes of class dealing with these discipline problems, so he didn't think the students' learning outcome was very good.

Doris thought Hakka class was just an extracurricular activity for some students; some saw it as a time for relaxing, while others were sent because they had behavior problems. She found the situation very frustrating:

Some students do not really want to learn Hakka. They are not Hakka people, either. But, they didn't want to stay in their original classrooms, and neither did they want to select the aboriginal language class. So, they come to my Hakka classes. They come here to play around, and some students are very special. These students have some bad behavior problems in their original classroom. So, their homeroom teachers kick them out to the Hakka classes, because they will bother their other students in their original classroom if they stay there. I found there is this kind of situation. So, for Hakka classes to encounter this situation is very tough! I mean, the

students who are kicked out by their original homeroom teachers. Just like this phenomenon. Sometimes I feel very frustrated and disappointed! (Doris, personal interview, June 22, 2006).

Doris still tried her best to figure out useful methods to communicate with these students. Sometimes she asked them to stay in the classroom after the bell rang so she could have a little talk with them. However, Doris said the students didn't want to cooperate with her. "They do not really want to listen to my words and just stay in the classroom, because I am not their homeroom or main subject teacher. (Sighing) I am just a language support teacher" (Doris, personal interview, June 22, 2006).

Doris remembered that she once had a girl in her class who always walked or ran around the room while Doris was teaching. That girl did not want to learn Hakka and did not pay attention to the teacher. In Doris' mind, she could do nothing, so she asked that girl to stay after class. But the girl did not care about what Doris said; she quickly ran away after the bell rang. Doris was very frustrated.

Doris remembered another little boy in her class who did not come to learn Hakka. He just came to the class to kill time, noisily chatting with other kids. At first, Doris was very patient with him and asked him not to affect other kids' learning. But he did not pay attention to what she said. Then Doris talked to him in a stricter tone:

I told him, 'Can you imagine what you would do if you were a teacher today? If your students made lots of noise in the classroom, how would you deal with this situation?' I spoke to him like this. Then he replied to me, 'Okay. Then maybe I will not talk so loudly today!' (Doris, personal interview, June 22, 2006).

In Doris' view, it was not easy to teach Hakka, because many children really lacked the motivation to learn. But she still tried her best to teach, so that some children could at least learn a little Hakka. Sometimes she stopped her teaching and dealt with the noisy

children, which would waste those good students' learning time. Doris said,

Because I can't just deal with his/her problem. If I just spend the time in dealing with this student, what about other students in this classroom? So (sighing), sometimes it's really a very tough situation! Today I will say, it's not actually easy to teach Hakka. But if there are no Hakka classes, students will have no contact with Hakka. (Sighs) So, I think the Hakka classes still have some effect (Doris, personal interview, June 22, 2006).

Flora said some students showed that they did not care about her class. They thought this class was an elective subject, not a required subject, and not an important subject. Hakka class was more relaxing than other classes. Some students, especially in the upper grades, did not have very good attitudes or were late for class. Flora explained,

They (students) usually are late for class by 20 or 30 minutes on purpose! But there are just 40 minutes in a class. They told me that they needed to do the cleaning work, or because it is raining outside; something like that (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Students' poor attendance was another frustration for Flora, who believed it involved other teachers' attitudes toward Hakka classes. Flora said,

For some current teachers, for example, this class time is for the native language class. Usually, from each homeroom, three or four students will come to Hakka class. Their original classroom is for Southern Min lessons, but some homeroom teachers are too lazy to teach Southern Min. They will say to their students, 'Write the testing sheets in Mandarin!' So, that homeroom teacher would ask the students who selected Hakka not to go to their classes, but to stay in the original classroom and work on the Mandarin testing sheets with their other classmates. Just prepare for the test, something like that. So, my students often didn't come to my class. Some were often absent for one week, or one month! (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

In addition, Flora talked about her frustration with the poorly behaved students who were kicked out by their original homeroom teachers. They did not want to learn Hakka, caused discipline problems in her class, and negatively affected other student's learning. Flora told about her experience with a 5<sup>th</sup> grade boy who had not brought his textbook to



class since the first week of the semester. Flora described the situation:

He was busy playing with his little magnets over there. He didn't pay attention to my teaching. So I told him, 'I think I will take your magnets temporarily. Let me ask you some simple questions. I will return your magnets if you get the right answer. If you don't answer the question right, I may just send these magnets to your other classmates as gifts.' Then, this kid just yelled at me, 'What did you say? If you dare give my magnets to other people, I will call my gang members to hit you!' You know, he just shouted at me in the class! Just like this! I was stunned there at that moment! (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

According to Flora, contemporary children have worse attitudes toward teachers than in her own previous school days. Sometimes while she was conducting a class, a few students would call out dirty words. These behaviors often affected her and other students' moods. Although Flora told them not to say those words, these students did not listen to her. Also some classes had some students who were like gang members. These students were hard to deal with. Flora felt powerless and was very upset. But she still tried her best to teach, even though she had to face this kind of problem.

Joan agreed with Flora's views on students' lack of motivation and poor behavior. She voiced her frustration:

My frustration mostly comes from students' discipline problems. Some are just like gang members. They damaged the desks and chairs! Children do not care about this class. Most of them usually select Southern Min; but very often, students who have bad behavior come to Hakka class. Maybe they think Hakka classes will be the most relaxing! They don't have any willingness to learn, and they are very naughty, talkative, and affect other students. The upper grade students especially don't pay attention to my words. As I was reading from the textbook, with the whole class repeating after me, those other students were just making noise there. It affected the whole class and my mood. They disturbed my teaching procedures. I don't like this situation! (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

Joan's anger showed on her face when she talked about the situation. She told me the wrinkles on her face had increased because of her frustration. Joan said,

Students are not afraid of our strict words; they don't take them seriously. You see, current classroom teachers also face this kind of situation, as well as the language support teachers. Everyone knows that students will not pay attention to language support teachers, because they have less power. Students know that these language support teachers are just like passengers. They leave after their teaching. Students are all very smart; they know this. But as subject teachers, our power is still less than that of the homeroom teachers. All control is in the homeroom teachers' hands. Children are all afraid of and respect their own homeroom teachers, but they do not respect subject teachers. Needless to say, the language support teachers have no influence on their minds (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

### *The Composition of the Hakka Class*

One thing that encouraged these participants was that their classes included both Hakka and non-Hakka students. The composition of the Hakka classes was made up of not only Hakka children, but also Southern Min and Mainlanders. As Joan described,

For example, in a class, usually there are about 30 students. When I ask them, 'Please raise your hands if you have older family members who are Hakkas at your home,' usually, only about half the class or less will raise their hands. That's it! It showed that other students are either Southern Mins or Mainlanders. I am very glad they come to learn Hakka (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

Flora, Elizabeth, and Betty also noted that originally most of their students were Hakka. They were very glad that some Southern Min and Mainlanders' children came to their classes because they had heard Hakka classes were interesting and fun. Similarly, Alan said many of his students were Southern Min kids. He also noted that there had been increasing numbers of children of foreign spouses, who came from Southeast Asia. Alan was glad these children were learning Hakka. Alan agreed that Hakka children usually made up less than half of his classes. It was not easy to find children from families where both of the parents were Hakka. Some students had just one Hakka parent; others had one Hakka grandparent.

### *Students' Positive Feedback*

The greatest encouragement for the participants came from the positive feedback from the children they taught. Some participants described their experiences with pride.

Joan expressed that sometimes while walking on campus, some children would greet her in Hakka, such as “sien sang ho” (Good day, Teacher!). Joan was pleased, even though it was just a very simple greeting in Hakka.

After so many years of teaching, finally I heard children say ‘sien sang ho’ (Good day, Teacher!) on campus. Just this very simple sentence made me feel so excited! (She smiles) Why? Because students can say aloud on campus, ‘sien sang ho’ (Good day, Teacher!). It shows that children affirm the status of the Hakka language. That is, children dare to say this simple sentence! Just this simple sentence; he ran away after he said it. (Laughing) I feel really happy! (Laughing) The seeds that we plant are gradually growing up! (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

In addition, most students in Joan’s school now regarded her as a Hakka teacher instead of an Art teacher, even though she taught both subjects. Joan was glad about that fact, and it gave her the energy to move forward.

Her students’ positive feedback also made Betty feel great and inspired her to keep up her involvement in Hakka teaching. Betty remembered when she taught one Hakka proverb: “pat ngiet tsung tshiu iun tsa ngiet, kak ngien i ta ngien seu.”<sup>8</sup> She told her students that they could observe the weather when Moon Festival took place that year, and see if the situation happened during the Lantern Festival the next year. She told students this Hakka proverb in May; later she almost forgot about it. The next year after the Lantern Festival, some students came to tell Betty that what she said was true, and

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<sup>8</sup> If the cloud covers the moon in the Moon Festival this year, it will rain in the next Lantern Festival.

that the Hakka proverb was full of wisdom. Betty recalled,

The students really went to observe the weather on the Lantern Festival the next year! And they told me, ‘Teacher, I have noticed that! It is really like what you said!’ (big laughter) They really kept my words in their minds (Betty, personal interview, July 5, 2006).

Betty also felt great when she heard some students speak to her in Hakka on campus. She remembered once when two children were having a conversation as she walked toward them.

One student said, ‘That’s our Hakka teacher!’ (in Mandarin). The other student immediately corrected that student by saying, ‘No, you need to say ‘sien sang’ (teacher), not teacher!’ (in Mandarin). I heard their dialogue. I feel I must be very interesting! (Betty, personal interview, July 5, 2006).

Betty was glad that students could express the word for “teacher” in Hakka, even though it was just a very simple word. For Betty, it meant a lot. She happily told about one little 1<sup>st</sup> grader who would come to tell her some Hakka words that he could say:

I remembered that one 1<sup>st</sup> grade student who liked to tell me what he could say in Hakka. Sometimes during the break or lunch time, he would say just like this: ‘Teacher, I can say ‘siit fan’ (eating the rice)!’ Very cute! (Betty, personal interview, May 27, 2006).

Though she sometimes faced frustrations while teaching Hakka, Doris said she still had good experiences that motivated her to stay involved. Doris remembered she once taught in an elementary school for one semester, but left because the class time was arranged during the morning study time. She instructed one little girl to participate in the Hakka speech contest while she was there. The girl’s mother later called Doris and asked her to come back to teach at that school. She told Doris that her daughter had come to love actively speaking Hakka with her at home after Doris taught her the language. Although Doris did not come back, she felt a small sense of accomplishment.

Doris recounted another encouraging experience. She remembered instructing a Southern Min boy to participate in a Hakka speech contest, in which he won a good prize. The judges of the contest were very impressed that a Southern Min child could perform so well in a Hakka speech contest. Doris felt very proud of him.

Some children came to learn Hakka because they wanted to communicate with their grandparents. Doris was encouraged by these children's great willingness to participate in class activities. Doris spoke of one student's situation.

I remember one 2<sup>nd</sup> grade boy who told me that he could speak Southern Min very well. His parents were not Hakka, but his grandmother was. He told me he couldn't speak Hakka, but he wanted to communicate with his grandmother, so he wanted to learn the language. Very lovely! (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

Doris' feedback from students also included some Hakka children who found a positive identity toward Hakka. These children were proud of being Hakka people, and would not feel ashamed about speaking their language. Doris told the experience of one little boy:

There was one 4<sup>th</sup> grade boy whose grandfather, a Hakka from Hua-lian, lived with him. This grandfather paid much attention to his grandson's speaking Hakka. The boy can speak Hakka very well, and would actively speak Hakka with me during the class. (She smiles) One time, he said, 'We will go to Hua-lian during summer vacation, and then we will go to Ken-ding' (in Hakka). Then another boy wanted to join our conversation. The first boy just wanted that other kid to go away. He said, 'Go away! This is my personal talking with Sir.' (Laughing) He eagerly liked to talk with me in Hakka. Then I said, 'That's great! You will go to Ken-ding. Don't forget to dive there!' (in Hakka) He said, 'okay' (in Hakka). When he talked, there is some Mandarin mixed in. But his Hakka is very good (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

These experiences made Doris feel encouraged. It showed that her endeavor worked. She felt that the seed of Hakka she put in was gradually spreading out.

Flora and Alan also drew encouragement from some of their students' feedback. At the end of one semester, some students came to tell them that they wanted to continue to learn Hakka the next semester, even though their parents thought learning it was not very useful. Flora and Alan said they felt great after hearing what their students said.

One boy came to talk to me and said, 'Teacher, my father told me that it is useless, no matter how great the grades are that I get in Hakka class. He wanted me to select Southern Min.' I asked him, 'So, how do you feel in my class?' He replied, 'I am very happy in this class!' Then I asked him, 'So, will you select Hakka for the next semester?' He said, 'Yes!' (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Alan said,

Some children came to me and said they told their parents, 'It's fun to learn Hakka. I will learn Hakka.' Nowadays most families don't have many children; usually there are only one or two in a family. So, some parents will let their children make decisions by themselves. Some parents will listen to their children's words (Alan, personal interview, June 8, 2006).

Most of Flora's and Alan's students thought learning Hakka in their class was very interesting and fun, and this let students look forward to these classes. This gave the teachers great encouragement to continue their Hakka work.

When I went to Flora's school to interview her, it was during the children's rest period. While on the way to her classroom, many students greeted Flora by saying 'sien sang ho' (Good day, Teacher). (Flora, personal interview field notes, June 15, 2006). Flora told me that most of her students liked her, and she even told her students to greet her in Hakka. At times she would feel very down after Hakka class because of some badly behaved students. Later, when she walked on campus, she would hear some kids greet her in Hakka during the break time, and she would feel better—that her Hakka teaching was still very worthwhile.

In addition, Flora said that sometimes she went shopping in the supermarket. Students greeted her by saying 'sien sang ho' (Good day, Teacher). Some students even introduced Flora to their parents when they met in the supermarket or on the street. These meetings gave Flora opportunities to have little conversations with a few Hakka parents. From these, Flora felt that her Hakka teacher role was planting some seeds in students' minds. This was the power that keeps Flora moving.

Greg said that most of his students thought his Hakka class was fun, and they liked to attend his class. He understood this from the concern his students expressed if he did not show up for class:

I sometimes missed Hakka class because of meetings at my other job. Then, when I went to class the next time, the students would ask me, 'Teacher, why didn't you come to class last time?' They would ask me like that. They would say, 'Teacher, you should come to the class. We expect to have your class.' (He smiles) I feel that the students like to attend my class. They feel the Hakka class is very fun! So I feel very encouraged! (Greg, personal interview, June 2, 2006).

Another thing Greg felt great about was the feedback students gave regarding the tapes he asked them to listen to after they went home. Greg gave his students tapes of the class content that he recorded. He wanted his students to listen to them in order to practice speaking the vocabulary correctly. Some of his students would tell Greg that his pronunciation was different than their parents'. Greg recalled,

When students came back to my class, some children would ask me, 'Teacher, my mother said that her Hakka in their village didn't say this word like you said it!' (In children's tone) So I then knew that their mothers also listened to the tapes I gave them! (He smiles) Ya, his/her mother also accompanied him/her to listen to the tapes. I said, 'Yes! That's right! In one area, the word 'xxx' is spoken like this, but in another area, they have a different way to express it.' So, I feel that these students did pay attention to learning Hakka! (Greg, personal interview, June 2, 2006).

According to Greg, these incidents showed that certain students really wanted to learn

Hakka.

### **Analysis**

We know that these participants were encouraged by their students' positive feedback. The students included Hakka and non-Hakka children. Also, the composition of the classes included children of other ethnic groups. For example, Southern Min, Mainlanders, and even foreign spouses' children were in the class. These teachers were happy that other ethnic group's children were also learning Hakka. One of Doris' students was a Southern Min, but he wanted to participate in a Hakka speech contest and eventually gave a great performance. Therefore, learning Hakka was not only restricted to Hakka children. The implementation of the native language program had its effect in bringing the language forward to new users. This concurs with King's (2001) view: Introducing the language to new speakers is also an important aspect of language revitalization efforts (p. 24).

In addition, implementing the native language program provided opportunities for improving intergenerational communication. From these participants' teaching experiences and interactions with their students, we saw the same results. For example, one of Doris' students wanted to learn Hakka because he would like to communicate with his grandmother. Alan recalled that one of his students told him he got more red envelopes from his grandparents during Chinese New Year. The boy's grandparents were happy that their grandson could speak a few Hakka words with them. Similarly, one little girl in Flora's Hakka class said her elderly family members were glad she could speak a



little Hakka, when she went back to visit their Hakka hometown on some family gathering occasions. Chuang's (2001) study showed that because of the great influence of Mandarin, decreasing interactions between grandparents and grandchildren were evidence of a newly-created generational distance. Currently, we could see that native language program provided potential opportunities for improving the quality of intergenerational communication.

Enhancing Hakka students' identities toward their language and group was another influence of the native language program in elementary schools. Hakka children's identity strengthened after they learned their own native language. These participants were also encouraged by this aspect. Children showed an interest in leaning their mother tongue. These teachers felt validated when their students would keep their words in mind. For example, Betty's students went to observe weather phenomena that Betty had told them about the year before. It showed that the students had positive feelings toward the Hakka proverbs, which were important parts of Hakka culture. Doris valued her interaction with one little boy who showed his passion for Hakka and talked with Doris in Hakka after class. That boy could positively express that he was a Hakka. This is as Jacobs (1998) indicated: "When children are allowed to learn their native languages, they gain pride and confidence in cultural identity, have an increased sense of self-esteem, and gain security in knowing their heritage and culture." Also, learning one's ancestral language is essential to positive cultural identity development (Fishman, 1991; Stiles, 1997; Wong-Fillmore, 1986). Knowing the language of one's ancestors greatly contributes to a sense of belonging (Brittain, 2002; Genesse, n. d.).

Furthermore, the implementation of the native language program had contributed to promoting the native language. From these teachers' experiences, we knew they were encouraged to hear Hakka spoken on the elementary school grounds. Even though the students spoke only just a few words, it showed that the status of this native language was growing. Students could freely show their Hakka competency on school grounds, which might let other students know that speaking this language was a natural and normal situation. At the same time, children got to know that speaking different ethnic groups' language was a natural phenomenon. This showed that the status of the native language was respected, unlike in the past, when native languages were not allowed to be used on campus. The affirmation of students' linguistic rights to the native language was put into practice in elementary schools.

Also, from the students' positive feedback to their teachers, we knew they were willing to learn the language. In addition, it had an effect on the children's families. This program influenced parents and family members in the awareness of speaking Hakka with their children or the importance of their native language. Thus, the role of the school in its implementation of the native language program had its influence on the children first, and then the influence extended to the family. Greg distributed the tapes to his students and let them listen to them at home. His students brought feedback from their parents to the class, showing that Greg's class had influence on the children's homes. Doris' students grew to love speaking Hakka and actively spoke it at home. The students' enthusiasm influenced their families, who also began to speak Hakka at home. Flora's students would introduce Flora to their family members while outside the school. This

also showed influence going from (children → family). As in Fishman's Reversing Language Shift theory (1991), the ultimate goal of revitalizing the language is bringing the language back to the home. From these participants' positive feedback from their students' homes, we could see although it was a huge task, some hope was beginning to appear.

We saw that these participants were frustrated about some students' low motivation to learn. The students' attitudes came from their surroundings and the larger environment, which included the school, current teachers, and students' parents' attitudes toward learning Hakka. People generally thought that the Hakka class was not an important subject like Mandarin, English, Science, Math, etc. Therefore, especially for the upper-grade level students, their homeroom teachers and parents might affect their learning willingness in the native language. As a result, many students did not pay much attention to learning Hakka. Hence, in order for the school to truly play its significant role in this language maintenance and revitalization process, it is necessary for the school to let students know the importance and value of learning native languages. Current teachers also need to have supportive attitudes toward their students' learning native languages, no matter which native language their students select.

### **Family Cooperation/Attitudes**

Family cooperation and attitudes toward their children learning the native language was another encouraging/frustrating factor for these Hakka teachers. A family's unsupportive attitude toward a student's learning Hakka could be shown from the

following two situations experienced by the participants:

First, some students originally leaned Hakka, but they did not continue with their Hakka classess the next semester/year. These students' parents wanted them to learn Southern Min, or the children just stayed in the original classroom. Secondly, parents had no time or did not want to practice speaking Hakka with their kids at home. These participants indicated that generally speaking, their students lacked the ability to conduct daily conversation in Hakka. These teachers blamed the problem on the families' failure to practice speaking Hakka with their children at home. Only a few students had the ability to use Hakka in daily conversation. These students usually lived with their grandparents, but they were very rare cases. Therefore, the participants thought the family needed to have a more supportive attitude toward their children's leaning Hakka.

After years of teaching Hakka, Flora learned to have no expectations about parents' attitudes toward their children's learning the language. Flora recalled how hard she worked in Hakka instruction in her first year. Flora remembered that she even gave her students homework during her first year of teaching Hakka. However, she was very frustrated by parents' attitudes. Flora recalled,

At that time, I asked them (students) to read the textbook to their parents after they got home, or sing the Hakka song that we learned in that day's class. Sing the song to their parents, and then let their parents sign the textbook. I told them (students), I will give the person who does this a reward the next time they come to my class. Just like this. But, (in an emphasizing tone) the next time, when students came to my class, some students told me that their mothers couldn't understand what they were singing. Also, some students said, 'My mother said, don't bother me! Leave me alone.' 'My mother said, Why is your Hakka teacher so wordy?' These responses were what my students told me. (Bitter laughter) I did not dare give students any homework after that! (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Flora showed me a pile of books at the back of her classroom when I conducted the

interview with her. She said those were her students' Hakka textbooks. She told me that many of her students did not want to take the textbooks home.

Very often, some students told me that their mothers told them, this (Hakka) is not important! Some students also told me, 'My mother said, no need to bring the Hakka textbook home! Just leave it in the school! Tell your Hakka teacher not to give you any homework!' This is what my students told me (bitter laughter). So, I just told the students, 'Okay, then, you can put your Hakka textbook in the classroom. I will not lose them (Bitter laughter). Just like this! Is it funny? Don't you think it's very shameful? So, later, I really dared not give them any homework; it would really cause parents' objections! So, if we teach Hakka, our heart needs to be very strong! I often can't endure this! (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Teaching Hakka was not a comfortable job for Flora, since she found that most parents did not have a supportive attitude toward the subject. Flora told me that she had lots of sad stories about this problem. She remembered once when a boy told her he would not study Hakka the next semester. When Flora asked him the reason, the boy replied, "My father told me that it is useless, no matter how great the grades are that I get in Hakka class." Flora met other children who said they had heard the Hakka class was fun. They wanted to come to the class, but they said their parents did not want them to learn Hakka. Flora remembered one little girl saying that she told her mother she wanted to choose Hakka for the next semester. That little girl's mother responded, 'Why learn that language? I don't speak that language. It's used by only a few people!' (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006). Flora was very upset by all of these situations related to parents' attitudes. She also felt very powerless.

Although Flora was disappointed with the lack of support for Hakka learning, she was glad to have the opportunity to teach Hakka in elementary school. She thought that the school played a significant role in revitalizing Hakka language. Without the class at

school, few parents would teach children the language. Flora thought the main factor causing the decline of the Hakka language lay in Hakka parents' unsupportive attitudes toward retaining their own language. According to her observation and experience, few Hakka parents would talk with their children in Hakka at home. Most parents paid more attention to their children's other learning subjects related to preparing for their children's future. Flora explained,

To tell the truth, without this native language class, nobody will teach the native language to children, because parents will not teach their children the native language. So, it is possible that this native language is really lost. But now, since the Hakka class was forced to open in elementary schools, it will possibly let some parents gain an awareness toward their own ethnic language. Children have the opportunity to learn the native language; then children will not forget this language. So, Hakka will not always be declining. If this class does not stay open, it will be impossible for parents to teach Hakka to their kids. Parents will not say, 'Okay, let's spend 10 minutes talking in Hakka today!' It's impossible for parents to do so! Usually, after children get home from school, parents are busy sending their kids to cramming schools, to learn Mandarin composition, English, or math. So, I think the main reason for the decline of Hakka languages lies in parents' attitudes. Parents do not talk with their children in Hakka (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Helen said the reason she always reviewed the previous lessons at the beginning of each class was that students forgot what they learned in the last class. Most of the students did not practice speaking Hakka at home. Helen could tell because most students did not read very well if asked to read alone.

According to Helen, most of her students just came to attend not to learn in this Hakka class once a week. They did not practice speaking Hakka at home after class. Class time was the only chance for them to practice speaking or have contact with Hakka. And these students were those who had grandparents that lived with them. Nowadays, in cities, it was not easy to find children who lived with their grandparents. Helen observed

that her students' parents were mostly in their 30s or 40s. These parents were very young, and most could not speak Hakka well. Hence, Helen thought it was impossible to ask the students to practice speaking Hakka with their parents at home, since the students could not speak it fluently.

Joan's frustration also came from the same situation—no parental help. So, she usually needed to spend a lot of time reviewing what students learned in the previous class. Most often, her students forgot what they learned in the class a week earlier. In Joan's experience, most parents did not have a very active attitude toward their children's learning Hakka. As a result, the parents did not practice speaking Hakka with their children at home. Joan said,

In my observation, very few, maybe one or two parents would talk or practice Hakka with their children at home! Very few! Very few! (In an emphasizing tone) This is the truth! For example, some mothers, whose ages are over 40 years old, don't even talk with their own elderly in Hakka, regardless of talking with their own children in Hakka. Also, few parents are both Hakkas, so they can't talk in Hakka. Some young parents, whose age is around 30 or 40, they themselves even can't speak Hakka. So, I think this language is almost dying! (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

Joan also thought that most people, including classroom teachers, did not have supportive attitudes toward children's learning the native language:

Most parents do not think it is necessary to learn the native languages. They think, 'Why learn the native language? It wastes time!' Or they think, 'No need to learn the native language. Learning English well is more important!' Even most teachers think that, because English is an international language. So, people think it's better to make use of that time to let children learn English (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

Elizabeth had noticed that students did not practice what they learned in class after they got home. Elizabeth often told her students that they needed to practice speaking Hakka with their parents after class. However, most of the time, when the students came

back to her class, they told Elizabeth that their parents were very busy. Also, after school, children went to cram schools to learn math, English, science, etc. At night, after cram schools, children needed to write the assignments or homework of subjects other than Hakka. Elizabeth was very disappointed by this situation.

Elizabeth noticed that students usually forgot what they learned during class, meaning that she was required to review what students had learned in the previous class. Elizabeth saw the families' unsupportive attitudes and perceptions toward native language education as the weakest aspect in the implementation of the program:

I think the weakest part is the family. Many parents, until now, still think the first priority is the entrance examination. They think a native language is not really necessary to learn. I often told my students, 'You need to tell your parents that you were praised by your Hakka teacher today!' Then when they came to the class the next time, I asked them, 'Did you tell your mother?' They replied, 'No!' Did you sing the Hakka song that we learned last time to your mother?' 'No!' they replied. Some students said, 'My mother said we have no time to do that. We need to get ready to go to cramming schools.' They replied to me just like this! So I think the weakest part in the native language education is on the family's part. Many parents say, 'Why learn the native language?' Actually, people who really object to native language education development are parents. I am very disappointed about this! (Elizabeth, personal interview, May 31, 2006).

Similarly, Ivy expressed her frustration from parents' attitudes. In her experience, parents generally thought Hakka would not be very useful in their children's future. Most parents knew their children soon would face the entrance examination for senior high schools, once they enter junior high schools. Therefore, most parents wanted to let their children spend time on subjects related to the tests in their future. It was very common that after school, parents sent their children to a variety of cramming schools, such as Mandarin composition, English, science education, math, etc. In general, most parents thought it wasted time to learn Hakka. Needless to say, these parents did not practice



speaking Hakka with their children.

Doris also said it was not easy to teach Hakka because some parents did not have supportive attitudes toward their children's learning it. Doris remembered that she taught one boy who learned to speak Hakka very well in her class. But the next semester, when the boy was in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, he did not come to learn Hakka again. Once he came to have a short conversation with Doris.

I asked him, 'Why don't you attend the Hakka class this semester?' He replied, 'It's all because of my mother. She forced me to select Southern Min. She said Southern Min is more useful!' (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

Compared to Southern Min, Doris said that maintaining and revitalizing Hakka was more difficult. Since few people in the society speak Hakka, most parents in cities would rather their children learn a majority language than a minority language.

Betty also said students rarely turned learning sheets back in to her students when she asked them to take them home and work on them with their parents. They had already forgotten about the assignment by the time they came to the next class, one week later. Therefore, she usually did the learning activities during class time. Betty said,

As for family, hahaha! (Bitter laughter). I once let the students bring the learning sheet home. And then it was never turned back! It just disappeared! They were all gone! Only very few students would turn it back in the next class time. Most students just lost them! So, it's very difficult to ask parents to cooperate with their children's learning Hakka. It's very difficult! Very difficult! (Betty, personal interview, May 27, 2006).

Betty commonly encountered students who came to her on campus and said they would like to learn Hakka, but their parents did not want them to select it. In Betty's view, most families did not have positive attitudes toward their children's learning Hakka. She said,

Because everybody thinks English is the most important! English is the most useful language! The most promising is English! They can have no classes in other subjects, but they must attend English classes! So, you hope children can speak Hakka well? I think it's very difficult! Quite difficult! Many parents actually don't talk with their kids in Hakka at home. They don't even talk in Hakka at home at all! (Betty, personal interview, May 27, 2006).

### Parents' Positive Feedback

Although parents' unsupportive attitudes greatly frustrated these participants, the teachers still received some positive feedback from parents, which encouraged them to keep moving in their Hakka teaching.

Doris recalled once when she distributed notes to her students at the beginning of a semester. That note introduced Doris as the students' Hakka teacher, and it told how and what she would teach in the Hakka language class. Doris asked her students to bring the note back to class with their parents' signature. She vividly remembered one student's father who wrote some kind words in the returned note:

I was very impressed with one father. He is a Hakka from south Taiwan. When his daughter returned the note to me, her father had written some comments, saying, "I am very envious that my daughter has the chance to have Hakka classes. I hope I can also attend some." I feel that, I just think this father had an identity as Hakka. Maybe he left his hometown when he was very little, so he couldn't speak Hakka very well. Or maybe he could speak Hakka, but he did not clearly understand about Hakka culture. So, I think that after I teach Hakka to this little girl, then maybe she can talk a little Hakka with her father at home. So, I replied in my comments to him, 'I hope you can sing 'ngiet kong kong' or other Hakka songs with your children when you have time.' I think if parents can sing Hakka children's songs together with their children, the effect will be better. I think this is very meaningful! (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

Although it was just a short sentence in which the parent expressed his positive feedback toward Doris as a Hakka teacher, it made her very happy.

Doris also gave another example of a boost she received from a parent's positive

feedback. She had taught Hakka in a school for one semester, but later left because of scheduling conflicts. The mother of a girl who had been in one of her classes called Doris to say that her daughter loved speaking Hakka. She asked if Doris could come back to teach at that school, because her daughter sincerely wanted Doris to teach her Hakka again. Doris was gratified to hear that parent's praise, and felt her Hakka teaching was worthwhile.

Doris said that children learning their native language needed to have the cooperation of their parents. According to her experience, although very few parents had supportive attitudes toward their children's learning Hakka, there was still hope. Doris gave her another example. Sometimes she participated in Hakka activities held by the local government, and usually encouraged her students to take part in them. She knew that if students participated in the activities, their parents would accompany them. Doris remembered that one time a parent thanked her for giving his son a chance to take part in this kind of activity.

I remember one father who brought this son to that activity. He thanked me for letting his son have a chance to be on stage, as well as to let his son see so many people speaking Hakka. His son came to love to speak Hakka. So, I think it depends on the parents' attitudes. This is a very rare case. Although it is very rare, there is still hope (Doris, personal interview, June 22, 2006).

Greg also received positive feedback from his students' parents. Greg gave his students tapes on which he recorded the content of the class, so they could listen at home and practice vocabulary words correctly. Greg recalled,

Sometimes when students came back to my class, some children would tell me, 'Teacher, my mother said that in her Hakka village, they didn't say this word like you said it!' (In children's tone) So then I knew that their mothers also accompanied them in listening to the tapes (He smiles). Ya, I said, 'Yes! That's right! In one area,

the word 'xxx' is spoken like this, but in another area, they have a different way of expressing it.' So, I can feel that these kinds of students did pay attention to learning Hakka! (Greg, personal interview, June 2, 2006).

Based on Greg's experiences, about two-thirds of his students' parents would ask their children to ask Greg about some Hakka words. Greg said,

For example, some kids' parents wanted their kids to ask me about meanings of some words, because they are not sure if it's okay to say some words in Hakka. Although they are all Hakka words, a word in one area has one meaning, but it means something else in another area. For example, some people say 'tson hi' for the word 'go home;' some people say 'kui hi.' But 'kui hi' means 'people pass away' in the central and north Taiwan. So, the expression is more negative there than in other places. Also, the same meaning of one word has different ways of being expressed in other areas. For instance, as for the ways to express 'wax apple,' some Hakka people say it as 'lien fu,' but in other places they say it as 'son ko.' Also, as for mangoes, some Hakka people say 'son e,' but in south Taiwan, Hakka people say 'fan son.' It sounds very interesting! So, parents would sometimes ask their children to come to my class to ask me these questions. The kids told me, 'Teacher, my mother asked if it's okay to say the word about xxx?' Just like these questions (Greg, personal interview, June 2, 2006).

Greg said it showed that the student's parents had an interest in their children learning Hakka. At the same time, it also let Greg feel the parents supported his teaching. In addition, some parents even came to Greg's class to learn a little Hakka. They learned with their children together in Greg's class. Greg could feel the positive support from the parents. These parents told Greg that they were originally Hakka people, but they only could speak Hakka a little. After listening to Greg's lessons, they told Greg that they were glad their kids had the opportunity to learn Hakka at school. Greg said that generally his students' parents had supportive attitudes toward his teaching. He felt a sense of accomplishment and felt this teaching was meaningful. One point that needs to be brought out here is that the school where Greg taught was small, with a total student population of only about 300.

## **Analysis**

In Fishman's RLS theory, we know that revitalizing the language needs to return to the home and the community. Family plays an important role in the process of revitalizing and maintaining the language by maintaining a supportive attitude. In his comparison of four successful indigenous programs in the world (Cree Way in Quebec, Hualapai in Arizona, Te Kohanga Reo in New Zealand, and Punana Leo in Hawaii), Stiles (1997) also concluded that successful programs need community support and parental involvement. The most important element for these programs is the support of the parents in the home. Reyhner (1988) emphasized how crucial it is that environments both inside and outside of school be provided where a student can use the newly acquired language skills. Students must also have environments where they can use the language they are learning in conversation.

However, from these participants' experiences, we saw that for most students in their classes, the learning effect was very limited. The families' unsupportive attitudes toward their children's learning Hakka (not helping children practice the language they learn at school) was frustrating for these teachers. In some cases, teachers did not even dare give any homework to their students. As a result, students lacked an environment to practice what they learned in the Hakka class, and they had no exposure to hearing the language spoken. In general, most parents still think that Hakka was not important or useful in society. Compared to other languages students learn, these participants thought that parents viewed Mandarin and English as more important. Mandarin was for testing

and communicating with other people; English was an international language. As for the native language, it did not seem relevant for children's futures and testing. Among the native languages offered, Southern Min was perceived to be more important than Hakka, because Southern Min was the dominant language. Consequently, most parents' attitudes toward their children's Hakka learning were not very supportive. Therefore, in order to revitalize/maintain Hakka, awakening parents' awareness of their own ethnic group's language was currently the most challenging issue.

### **School Cooperation and Implementation**

The participants in this study said the school's cooperation with the native language program affected their feelings and enthusiasm toward teaching Hakka. Some participants expressed that they were frustrated about the school's stand on the practical details of the program's implementation. These details included the arrangements for class time, classroom teachers' attitudes toward students' learning Hakka, and the lack of classrooms. According to these participants, the school principal and the dean of studies played important roles in making decisions about arranging the class time and available facilities. In addition, some participants were also frustrated about other teachers' unsupportive attitudes toward students' Hakka learning.

#### *School Cooperation*

##### Class time

Several participants in this study expressed frustration at Hakka class times, which

were often not arranged during regular learning times. According to their experience, some schools arranged Hakka classes in morning study time or nap time; this affected students' learning.

Alan taught in several schools. In some schools, the classes were arranged during the morning study time, between 7:40 and 8:20 a.m. Alan did not like that early time because students had poor attendance, many were often late for class, and students felt too sleepy to be alert. In addition, some students would not come to the class because they needed to participate in other school activities, such as learning musical instruments or track and field. The result was that different students would come on different days. Alan felt very frustrated about these situations.

In the morning study time, different students would come on different days. This week, these few students show up, while the next week, those few students show up. As a result, I couldn't conduct my teaching according to my syllabus. I need to teach from the beginning. It seems endless. I don't have any feeling of accomplishment, and I'm very tired! (Alan, personal interview, June 8, 2006).

Alan was considering quitting teaching in that school when I conducted the interview with him. Many students would not come to the classes for several different reasons. Sometimes students would come to tell him that their homeroom teachers asked them to stay in the original classrooms because the mid term or the final exam was coming, and they needed to prepare.

During the morning study time, I go to many schools. The students/members are not stable. Sometimes some students told me, 'The exam is coming! My teacher won't let me come to your class. Our teacher said that we need to do the review work!' Then I just thought, 'So, what class am I teaching? My class is also a subject! My class is not important? I also have my class syllabus! I also need to do the review work.' But what can I do? I can't do anything! Because I am not their school's official teacher! I am just a language support teacher. Can I voice my needs more loudly? Very powerless! During those morning study times, if students don't come

to class, how can I teach? (Alan, personal interview, June 8, 2006).

Charles' school arranged the native language class for the lower grade students during regular class time. The upper-grade students' classes were offered during the morning study time because they had the pressure of preparing for testing. Most of Charles' Hakka classes were during the morning study time, and the attendance of his class was not very good. Sometimes children missed class for disciplinary patrol jobs, sports teams, or music lessons. Charles felt that it was impossible to teach Hakka because so many students were always absent from his classes.

Doris once taught in an elementary school where her Hakka classes were arranged during morning study time. She was always tired because she needed to get to school very early, before 7:30.a.m. After teaching there for one year, Doris did not return. In addition to the inconvenience, Doris also noted the students' poor learning and lack of enthusiasm so early in the morning. She was also frustrated by their low attendance.

#### The lack of classrooms

Some schools did not have classrooms for the Hakka classes. This was not only inconvenient for conducting the teaching activities, but it also affected the students' learning moods.

One school where Betty worked did not arrange a classroom for Hakka classes due to lack of facilities. Betty had to move from room to room. She frequently planned specific teaching activities for her class, but would later need to change them because the room had been changed. Before the Hakka class, the school would broadcast that it had been changed to another classroom. Then, students who selected Hakka needed to pay



attention to which classroom they needed to go. Betty recalled,

Sometimes my students complained that they always needed to run to different classrooms whenever they had Hakka class. I just replied to them, 'Never mind! At least we have a classroom, unlike the students who selected aboriginal languages. You know, they even don't have a classroom. They need to have their class outside.' I just comfort my students this way (Betty, personal interview, July 5, 2006).

Although Betty tried to adjust to the difficulties of not having a classroom, she still did not feel respected by that school. She told me during our first interview that she planned to quit teaching there. But later, in our third interview, she told me she had reconsidered and decided to stay on, because some of her students wanted her to keep teaching them. They told Betty they would choose Hakka for the next semester if Betty continued as their teacher.

Helen's school also failed to arrange a fixed/particular classroom for Hakka classes. Students who chose Hakka usually needed to spend time searching for the right classroom. When they went to the wrong classroom, Helen needed to spend 10-15 minutes finding them or waiting. Hakka class only lasted 40 minutes per week. Another frustration occurred when Helen's Hakka class was scheduled to meet in the science laboratory, which contained many dangerous chemicals. Helen was a little nervous whenever the class was held in the lab because she worried that her students might break something.

Therefore, Helen hoped the school would assign a classroom to Hakka classes. Then she could decorate the classroom with some Hakka-related items. The students' learning environment would be better, and it would be easier to calm the students down in class, Helen believed.

### Classroom teachers' attitudes

Classroom teachers' attitudes toward students' learning Hakka was another frustrating factor for most participants in this study. Overall, the participants said they felt the other teachers did not have very supportive attitudes.

Flora noted that some classroom teachers kicked students out who behaved disruptively and sent them to Hakka classes. Spending time dealing with the discipline problems caused Flora great difficulties. Those students usually had a particular attitude: "I came to this Hakka class because my teacher didn't like me. He/she didn't want me to stay in the original classroom" (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006). Flora was extremely frustrated.

In addition, some classroom teachers would make use of the native language class time for extra studies or other activities, so they would ask students not to come to Hakka classes. Many students often had to miss Flora's class.

Usually, in one homeroom, there will be three or four students who come to Hakka class. Their original classroom is for Southern Min, taught by their original homeroom teacher. But some are too lazy to teach Southern Min, so they will say to their students, 'Write Mandarin testing sheets!' That homeroom teacher will ask the students who selected Hakka not to go to Hakka class, but instead to stay in the original classroom with their other classmates. Just prepare for the test, something like that. So, my students often didn't come to my class. Sometimes they were absent for one week. Sometimes they were absent for one month (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Flora told me that before my arrival for our interview, she had a 4<sup>th</sup> grade Hakka class, but some students did not come. Flora asked one student to go and see what happened. That student came back and told Flora that the homeroom teacher wanted all of his students to stay in the original classroom to review for Mandarin and math. Flora

said,

That student told me her teacher had said, 'No need to go to the Hakka class! It's not necessary to attend the native language class! I just don't want them to go there!' I felt very bad after hearing this. Some classroom teachers' attitudes frustrate me! (She sighs) I sometimes feel so discouraged that I don't even want to keep teaching (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Flora did not complain about this situation to her school administrators. She knew that because she was only a language support teacher, she had no power. Flora said,

So, how to say that? I can't express this situation. If I tell the office of the dean of studies, I will not be welcomed by people in this school. After all, I am only a language support teacher. So I can't say anything! Just like this situation! Very poor! When I saw this teacher, I still needed to respect her, even though I knew she was the one who didn't let her students to come to our Hakka classes. (Bitter laughter) Because I shouldn't offend her. I just have to swallow the pain. As for how many years I will continue to teach Hakka here? I don't know. I just try my best to do it! (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Alan was also frustrated by other teachers' attitudes. Sometimes when he was in the middle of teaching, other teachers would come to his class and ask a student to leave the classroom. He recalled,

I remember once when I was teaching class, another teacher came and directly asked her student to go with her. She didn't politely say to me, 'Teacher, may I ask my student xxx to leave with me for a while?' She didn't say it like that! Instead, she said at the door, 'I want to find student xxx.' And then she took her student away. I was very unhappy at that moment! (Alan, personal interview, May 25, 2006).

Sometimes, other homeroom teachers just asked their students not to come to Alan's Hakka classes because they needed to stay in their classroom to study. Alan said,

I got angry! I just thought (hitting the table loudly), now it's my Hakka class time. It's my right to give the students Hakka. Also, for the students who selected Hakka, this was their time that belonged to me. What do you mean, there's no need to come to Hakka class? You see, don't you think it really makes people angry? (Alan, personal interview, May 25, 2006).

Alan was very unhappy and felt he was not respected by the other teachers. He

thought about quitting as a Hakka teacher, but he did not quit. He thought it was necessary to keep teaching Hakka; otherwise, some schools would not open Hakka classes, with the excuse that they could not find teachers. Alan described his feelings:

I just want to keep our Hakka children's right to learn Hakka. As for whether schools open Hakka classes or not, it's none of my business! I don't need the money, either! Actually, I don't earn a lot by teaching Hakka, anyway, and I don't need to go so far to teach one class there. I just think I need to do something for our Hakka group, for the children's right to learn Hakka (Alan, personal interview, May 25, 2006).

Alan did not dare complain about the situation to his school. Like Flora, he was only a language support teacher, not a formal teacher. At the end of the semester or the academic year, the school had an exam for the language support teacher. Alan feared that if he complained too much, it was likely that he would not be accepted as a language support teacher in that school.

Betty blamed other teachers' attitudes toward Hakka class for students' low attendance and enrollment in her classes. Betty remembered an encounter with a Hakka parent in the supermarket. Betty asked this mother why her son did not select Hakka. That mother told Betty that she had not known about it. She said that her son's whole class selected Southern Min. Their homeroom teacher did not even distribute the form for students to select native languages. This homeroom teacher taught Southern Min, so Betty said it was more convenient for him to arrange his own teaching schedule and have everyone just stay in the original classroom. If students went to another classroom to learn Hakka, it would not be easy for the homeroom teacher to manage them.

In Betty's experience, some homeroom teachers would make use of the time to do other activities that students who went to Hakka class would miss. As a result, parents did

not want their children to go to Hakka classes. Betty explained,

When the Hakka classes are scheduled during morning study time or nap time, their classmates in the original classroom might be doing other activities. Students who were out of the room for Hakka classes wouldn't do those activities. For example, during morning study time, the students who stayed in the original classroom wrote in the parent-teacher contact booklet.<sup>9</sup> Students who came to my Hakka classes did not write in the booklet. After a few weeks, a mother would ask her child, 'Why didn't you write in the parent-teacher contact booklet?' The kid would reply, 'Because I went to Hakka classes. When I came back, our teacher had already wiped the contents of the parent-teacher contact booklet off the blackboard' (in children's tone). I think this happens because that homeroom teacher does not consider students who go to Hakka classes. In some cases, for example, in the original classroom, students made handicrafts during the morning study time. The students who went to Hakka class needed to make use of their break time to make the handicraft. This resulted in a dilemma for some students. Therefore, some parents would say to their children, 'Then, don't go to learn Hakka!' (Betty, personal interview, may 27, 2006).

Charles thought native language education in elementary school was functioning much well than in earlier times. He said that at least now Hakka classes were opened in elementary schools. Charles said that if the principle could truly implement the native language program, it would be great. Charles was more concerned about classroom teachers' attitudes toward students' learning the native language. According to his experience, some classroom teachers implied to students that learning Hakka was not very useful, and wanted the students to select Southern Min.

I worry more about the current teachers' attitudes. Many of them don't support the Hakka classes. Some homeroom teachers, if they are Southern Min, will suggest to their students, 'Very few people speak Hakka. Only a few students select it, so it maybe the school can't open Hakka classes. Maybe it's better to select a more useful language, such as Southern Min.' Some teachers will say so (Charles, personal interview, June 20, 2006).

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<sup>9</sup> A booklet is used for communication between the homeroom teachers and students' parents. Usually, the homeroom teacher asks students to write things, including every day's homework or assignments.

Doris also talked about some classroom teachers' non-supportive attitudes toward Hakka teaching. This could be shown by some homeroom teachers kicking out badly behaved students from their classrooms. These students caused a lot of discipline problems in Hakka class. Doris described one boy she taught:

I once taught a boy who must have had some behavior problems in his original classroom. His classmates also told me that was true. He just kept walking around the classroom while in the class. Sometimes I couldn't do anything, because I can't just look after him! If I just deal with his behavior, what about other students? So, (she sighed), sometimes it's really a tough situation! (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

Doris told one popular joke about other teachers' attitudes toward students' learning Hakka:

I heard about one joke—it's very funny! It's about the form for selecting the native language. There was a class. Five kids selected Hakka. So, that homeroom teacher called upon those five children. He asked, 'Which of you can speak Hakka?' Three children responded that they could speak a little Hakka. Then, the teacher said, 'So, you can speak Hakka. Then, you don't need to select Hakka since you can already speak Hakka! Just select Southern Min! As for the other two of you, since you can't speak Hakka, why do you need to learn Hakka? Just learn Southern Min!' So, that class had not one student selecting Hakka! (Big laughter) This is a very popular joke! But it really happened! (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

Joan was a classroom teacher who also taught Hakka in her school. Joan talked about some of her colleagues who did not think it was necessary for children to learn native languages at school. For example, they thought learning Hakka just wasted children's time in school; that learning English well was more important, because English was an international language. Therefore, Joan said some of her colleagues thought it was better to make use of that time to let children learn English, a more useful and helpful language for the children's future.

### *Schools' Other Implementation Activities*

Some schools held other additional implementation activities whose influence helped the effect of the native language program. These activities gave the participants in this study great encouragement. The activities included Native Language Day (one day per week), native language shows held at the end of the semester, Hakka speech contests, and Hakka camps during summer break. In these participants' perspectives, although the native language classes met just once per week, they still had an effect because of these additional activities.

Doris gave an example that she thought had some influence. She tutored a student to participate in one school's Hakka speech contest. Doris asked the student's homeroom teacher to let him have more chances to practice. So, the student was allowed to speak in front of the whole school every morning, which attracted the attention of all the other students in this school. Although Doris did not teach there the next year, she heard that the number of students who selected Hakka increased for the next academic year.

I think this phenomenon is very interesting! So, this has caused some influence on other students in that school. I mean, an example was set. Other students would feel that, 'Wow! She speaks Hakka so well! She is just in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade!' And some children who are also Hakka might think, 'Actually I can do that, too!' Just like this. Then it had its influence! I think this is good! (Doris, personal interview, June 16, 2006).

Flora talked about how her school held its Native Language Day. Every Wednesday morning, from 8:00 to 8:30 a.m., the school would broadcast a Hakka VCD in each classroom so that all students in the school could learn Hakka. Flora said that although the school leaders had good intentions in doing so, the program's real effect still depended on the homeroom teachers' attitudes. For example, while we talked about this,

Flora asked her little daughter if her homeroom teacher let them watch the Hakka VCD yesterday. Her daughter replied that they watched an English VCD (Flora, personal interview field notes, June, 15, 2006). According to Flora's experience, not all homeroom teachers would cooperate with the Native Language Day, even though the school had a policy to let the students have a chance to learn Hakka.

Flora recalled that she played "Sound of Hakka"<sup>10</sup> every Tuesday morning for one semester. This was broadcast to the whole school. Flora let two students host the broadcast, which lasted about ten minutes. Before each Tuesday, Flora wrote the transcript for these two students. They would have a short conversation in both Mandarin and Hakka. Afterwards, the host asked questions related to Hakka. Then, all the students in the school had a chance to write their answers on a note and put it in a mailbox. For example, the topic was "ng ngiet zie" (Dragon Boat Festival), so, at the end of the conversation, the host would ask the whole school, "What does 'ng ngiet zie' mean?" The next week, the host would select ten students who had answered the question correctly; these students would get small gifts. Based on Flora's observation, children liked to listen to the 'Sound of Hakka.' They were very happy they could get gifts by participating in the question-answer activities. Flora thought this helped students accept Hakka.

According to Elizabeth, some of her students selected Hakka classes because they watched the Hakka shows on Native Language Day at the end of the semester. Elizabeth knew this from her talking with her students. In the first Hakka class of each semester, she usually asked her students—new students, especially—why they came to learn Hakka.

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<sup>10</sup> A broadcasting program



Some students told Elizabeth they were attracted by the Hakka shows at the end of the previous semester. They thought it looked like it was interesting and fun to learn Hakka. Elizabeth talked about how the school put the Native Language Day together. On that particular day, each native language class, including Hakka, Southern Min, and Aboriginal language, would present their shows to the whole school. These shows included skits, singing, and dancing. Elizabeth always taught different show programs to her students of each class. Some classes sang Hakka songs; other classes acted out plays in Hakka.

Ivy said that one semester in her school, she and several of her Hakka colleagues picked about 20 Hakka songs and put them on a tape. During the cleaning period each day, the tape was broadcast to the whole school. After some time, teachers in the school told Ivy that the Hakka song tape had its effect. Ivy recalled,

Once one of my colleagues told me, “xx teacher, I think they (the Hakka songs) have had some effect! The children in our classroom were rapping the window and happily singing ‘tien ko e, lok sui’ (It’s raining). (Big laughter) Very interesting! (Ivy, personal interview, June 21, 2006).

Joan’s school held other activities related to implementing Hakka. These activities included broadcasting Hakka songs, holding Hakka summer camps, and funny games for all the school’s students. In addition, songs in different languages (including English, Southern Min, Hakka, and aboriginal language) would be broadcast during the cleaning period.<sup>11</sup> Joan usually took the Hakka songs to broadcast. She thought the effect was

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<sup>11</sup> Each day usually has two periods of time for cleaning activities. Students clean their own classrooms and the school. Each cleaning time is 15 minutes. One period is in the morning, just after students enter the school, during the 15 minutes before the bell rings. The other period is in the afternoon, before the students leave school.

great:

After the broadcast, if students heard songs I had taught them, they would get very excited! They usually sang the song following the rhythm! (Laughing) Children would say, 'Wow! Our Hakka teacher just taught this song to us!' (She mimics a child's voice) I broadcast all the songs that I ever taught. They didn't know it was me who broadcast the Hakka songs to the whole school! (Big laughter) (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

In Joan's view, children felt that because the school was broadcasting Hakka songs in public, then it was reasonable to learn Hakka. Joan thought the students' Hakka learning awareness would be enhanced.

In addition to the school broadcast, last semester Joan prepared another activity to help students in the school learn Hakka. Wednesday mornings were the time for all the students in the school to hoist the national flag. Joan went to the review stand to teach everyone a Hakka proverb. The whole school, including the teachers and students, learned it. Joan also posted one Hakka proverb a week on the bulletin board in front of the dean of studies' office. Students had to guess the proverb's meaning; it was like a riddle. Students could write their answers on a small piece of paper and drop it in the mailbox. The next week, when Joan taught the new Hakka proverb in the review stand on Wednesday morning, she would take that box to draw lots. Students who were picked would be awarded a small prize (e.g., little stationery) in front of the whole school. According to Joan's experience, students were very proud and excited to get a prize in front of the whole school. Joan said,

Children will pay attention to Hakka because of these activities. They will then begin to learn Hakka. Even it's only one sentence or one Hakka proverb; it's also great! (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

Last summer, Joan's school held a Hakka summer camp. In addition to the students

from her school who joined the camp, students from other elementary schools were also welcomed. The goal of the Hakka camp was to let children to experience Hakka village life, at the same time giving children a better understanding about Hakka culture. Joan said,

After the students registered for the summer camp, we arranged the tour route. We went to Bei-pu in Shin-jwu (a Hakka village in north Taiwan) to see the Hakka village and experience the life there. We also arranged some activities to let children make some traditional Hakka foods by themselves. Children enjoyed playing and doing at the same time. And then, we took children to eat Hakka food at the local Hakka restaurant. This let students taste some famous and special Hakka food. The children loved it! We also took students to visit the fields. Anyway, we let students experience the true Hakka life there (Joan, personal interview, June 10, 2006).

Joan believed that this camp took place because their current principal was a Hakka; he was more willing to hold Hakka-related activities, so her school had many such activities. In Joan's thought, there was difference depending on whether the principal was a Hakka or not. She thought that if the principal were a non-Hakka, he/she would not have had so much enthusiasm for holding Hakka activities. Joan told me that the current principal was going to retire soon, and she was a little concerned who the new principal would be.

Charles found that sponsoring Hakka speech contests helped students learn Hakka. Charles thought students could memorize the speeches in Hakka, and then gradually learn the meaning of words. He said,

Holding Hakka speech contests has a great effect. As children participate in them, they need to memorize the contents of their speech. I think if they memorize it well, it becomes their own. And then whenever they need to use it, they can take it out (Charles, personal interview, June 27, 2006).

Charles instructed two students for participation in a nation-wide Hakka speech

contest. These two students performed excellently in the contest, and Charles was very proud. His school broadcast the video of the previous year's Hakka speech contest before the upcoming event, and this also had its effect. Each classroom had one TV set, so every student could watch the video about Hakka speech contests. Charles said that all the students in the school learned about the existence of Hakka through these videos. He thought the principal aired them because he wanted his students to make a good showing in the Hakka speech contest—so he supported the activity. Charles thought this event was one good way to let students know Hakka.

In one school where Betty worked, she designed the activities and courses for the Hakka summer camp. The Hakka summer camp ran every morning for five days. Students from the whole school could attend, no matter which grade they were in. Students from a nearby school could also participate. In Hakka summer camp, the activities included many DIY activities, such as stone painting, playing a pottery flute, making cloth dolls, making delicious Hakka food, and taking a field trip to Hakka restaurant. According to Betty, the mission/meaning of Hakka summer camp was to let children have fun and gain some interest in Hakka.

Betty felt that the traditional things related to Hakka would not be of much use in motivating students to learn Hakka. She thought it would be necessary to combine modern crafts, and then integrate Hakka into the activities. In this way, children would feel it was more interesting to join in the Hakka activities, and not boring or just focused on traditional Hakka goods. For example, when Betty taught 12 sheng-shiaw in Hakka, she let her students make a paper sculpture. Children could make their projects according to

their favorite animals in the 12 sheng-shiaw. While making the sculptures, Betty would teach her students the related words in Hakka. Other handicrafts Betty used for her instructional activities included clay modeling, cloth dolls, and hand fan drawing.

Another important point that needs to be mentioned is that Betty thought Hakka teaching needed to be integrated with classroom teachers' specialties. For example, in designing the pottery flute lessons for Hakka summer camp, Betty invited a current music teacher to assist her. That teacher taught pottery flute while Betty taught students to sing Hakka children's songs. Students liked to play the pottery flute, a popular musical instrument. At the same time, the classroom teacher in this school participated in related Hakka activities and had a chance to get to know more about Hakka. Betty thought Hakka summer camp was influential in intriguing students' interest in Hakka. Some of Betty's students in her class for the next semester chose Hakka class because of their participation in the Hakka summer camp.

#### *Views toward One Class per Week*

Theoretically, research literature on second language learning states that many hours of exposure to the target language are necessary. Interestingly, most participants in this study did not think it was necessary to increase the number of hours for native language classes. They thought it would increase elementary school students' learning burdens and cause most people to object. They held these views in spite of the fact that one class per week was very short, and students generally did not learn this native language well enough because of this limited time. Teachers recognized that the social

environment in schools in Taiwan put more emphasis on testing.

Elizabeth opined that if each elementary school could truly implement that one language class, and if the native language teacher could truly teach well, then it would be sufficient for the school's role in helping maintain and revitalize the native language. In Elizabeth's view, the meaning of the native language program in elementary school was in preserving and transmitting the native language and culture. The most important thing was for the family to use the native language. The mother tongue still needed to be spoken and used at home. If the parents in the family were not willing to use their mother tongue, no matter how many more classes were taught in school, they would be of no use. The meaning of the native language class was different from that of Mandarin and English. Elizabeth thought it was not necessary to add more classes for native language in elementary schools.

To tell the truth, mother tongue still needs the family's cooperation. The meaning of one class in school is that it makes use of the school's resources to get students together to have a time for discussion and learning this language. Actually, it takes students going back to their family to practice talking in their mother tongue. The meaning of the native language is not the same as Mandarin, English, and math. It lies in preserving this language, and increasing its speakers. It is not a subject for testing. Also, it is not spoken internationally, like English. It is not necessary to add more hours in schools. Adding more hours for students to learn a mother tongue will waste their time. To tell the truth, I think one class per week is enough. But that one class needs to be implemented well (Elizabeth, personal interview, May 24, 2006).

In Elizabeth's view, the government and the media needed to awake/promote the family's awareness in transmitting the native language at home and let children's parents have the awareness to speak their mother tongue with their children.

Similarly, Flora agreed that one class per week was enough for implementing the

native language program in elementary schools. Although she was a Hakka teacher, Flora expressed her view as a parent. Flora thought students could develop some basic abilities in their native language after learning it for six years during their elementary school days. Adding more classes in the native language to students' class schedules did not seem practical. The reason was that Taiwan was a society focused on entrance examinations, and in reality, for students, the main subjects of Mandarin, math, and English were more important. Flora said:

As a parent, in fact, adding more class hours for learning the native language at school wastes children's time. I think one class per week is enough! No need to add more classes. Because you learn the mother tongue, is it useful if you learn to speak it very well? It's not very useful! This is our parents' attitude! I am also a parent! I don't want my children to have native language classes three or four times each week. It's crazy! The most important thing is that children need to learn Mandarin and math well! They need to have tests in Mandarin, math, and other main subjects. They don't have a test in Hakka. This is very practical! Now I am talking as a parent, although I am also a native language teacher. But it's a reality. This is true! (Flora, personal interview, June 15, 2006).

Flora believed that the most meaningful goal of implementing the native language program in elementary school lay in awakening the family's awareness in speaking their mother tongue with their children. According to Flora's experience, most parents did not have awareness about transmitting and preserving the native language and culture. If more classes for native language were put in elementary schools, there would be great objection from parents.

In a similar vein, Doris stated that one class per week was appropriate in current situation. The final goal of the native language program was to return it to the family—not relying on the school. But Doris thought the school might be able to do something helpful in helping increasing student's exposure/chances to learn the Hakka

language. She remembered that one elementary school let its students learn Southern Min the first semester, and then during the second semester, all students learned Hakka. The school did not allow its students to choose a native language based upon their preference. The intention of that school was to let their students know/understand a little about each native language in this island. Doris thought this method was good. In this way, she reasoned, every student could have opportunities to know each ethnic group's language.

Based upon these participants' experiences, we know that the particular sociocultural environment (emphasizing testing/exams) in Taiwan is unlike the literature, which suggested that the immersion style or bilingual programs are desirable in the language revitalization/maintenance process. These participants thought that if schools could cooperate and implement the current native language program well, at the same time, teachers could try their best. In addition, if the family could play its role well, then the revitalization/maintenance of the native language in this island will function well.

### **Analysis**

The encouraging aspects experienced by these participants in some schools let us know that the implementation of the native language program had its effect in promoting the language's status. The additional activities that some schools held for the native language also contributed to awaken people's consciousness about the importance of learning their own mother tongues. This corresponds to Fishman's (1990) concept of "ideological clarification," which is an essential first step or precursor to RLS. Fishman conceived this stage as consisting of "consciousness heightening and reformation" (p. 17).



We know that these participants felt encouraged that the native language was no longer regarded as a low-class language. Native language instruction could exist naturally and normally on the elementary school grounds. Hence, the linguistic right of each ethnic group was affirmed in elementary schools. Additionally, the school's other implementing activities were helpful in attracting students of different ethnic groups to learn and understand the native languages in this island. Students had opportunities for contact and exposure to each ethnic group's languages, which could contribute to enhance the positive identity of languages spoken by the minority. This consequence supports Dorian (1987), who argued that community and school support of a threatened language can mitigate the negative attitudes towards the language and its speakers. These attitudes typically accompany language decline, and have been internalized by speakers and potential speakers of the language (p. 64).

As for the frustrating aspects experienced by these participants while working in their schools, we know that low-level decisions to support higher-level ones are also very important in the successful implementation of maintaining/revitalizing the native languages. Since the implementation of the native language program in Taiwanese elementary schools is a top-down language planning activity, schools' cooperation and real details related to how to put the implementation of the native language program into practice have critical influence on the success of the whole language planning process. The decisions and attitudes of school personnel, including the principal, teachers, and administrators, toward the implementation of the native language play a bridge role which connects the government policy to the real front line of students learning the native

language.

In this study, some of the participants' schools cooperated well. In them, the native language classes were scheduled during regular class time instead of the morning study time or naptime, and sufficient facilities, classrooms, and administrative support were provided. In addition, these schools had many outside class activities to enhance the effect of the native language program. Other schools, however, did not cooperate well. In those schools, the administration and current teachers did not have supportive attitudes toward their students' learning Hakka. As Cooper (1989) stated, "The entire process of formulating and implementing is best regarded as a spiral process, beginning at the highest level of authority and, ideally, descending in widening circles through the ranks of practitioners who can support or resist putting the policy into effect" (p. 160). Other literature also asserted that any school innovation, in order to be successful, must include a wide range of school staff, and must permeate and be supported by the school culture (Perez, 2004, p. 174). In this study, we know that each school had a different policy and attitude regarding the implementation of the native language program. Although the government has a policy to implement the native language program in elementary schools, the real implementing situation in each school varies. Therefore, how to implement native language instruction well, and how to work together among these parties (school administrators, current teachers, and language support teachers) remains a serious issue.

## **Chapter VI: Summary and Implications**

In this chapter, the data discussed in the previous chapter will be highlighted to answer the original research questions and to draw conclusions. Then, a discussion of implications, the limitation of this study and the researcher's personal reflections will be presented.

### **Summary**

In the last few decades, the native languages in Taiwan experienced a situation of being prohibited to be spoken in some public areas and schools. A Mandarin Movement, which started fifty years ago, once prevailed in the whole society. In recent years, with a change in the political environment, the native languages on this island gradually began to be restored in public areas. In 2001, the Ministry of Education announced the implementation of a native language program in elementary schools. In each public elementary school, students should receive native language instruction in one class (forty minutes) per week. Since teachers serve in the most important role, due to their direct interactions with students while providing necessary instruction to their students, any successful new educational practice should consider the role of teachers; therefore, exploring their views about the programs in which they are participating appears to be of the utmost importance. Hence, this research focused on native language teachers, their experiences through the past Mandarin Movement, and their involvement in the native language program in elementary schools. By means of providing deep exploration of these native language teachers' views, the purpose of this study was to provide

suggestions for successful implementation of the native language program in Taiwanese elementary schools.

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore teachers' views regarding their Mandarin Movement experience and their involvement in the native language program in elementary schools. Ten teachers involved in the native language program in Taiwanese public elementary schools participated in this study. The participants in this study were all from the Hakka-speaking group, a minority group on this island. Among the ten participants, eight participants were Hakka language support teachers; two participants were current classroom teachers who also taught Hakka in their schools. The age of these participants ranged from the 40s to 60s.

As this study was focused on the participants' experiences and stories from both their past and current practice, narrative inquiry was utilized to conduct this research. The major data collection strategy of this study was interviewing. Each interview with the participant was conducted for about 90 minutes. Each participant was interviewed at least 3 times. Each formal interview with the participants occurred in the participants' homes or the schools where they worked and was electronically recorded. The field notes obtained from the interviews, along with verbatim transcripts gathered from the interviews, provided primary data for the study. After conducting the interviews, the interviews were transcribed and then processing with data analysis. The data analysis was done by means of the constant comparative method.

These teachers represented ten cases of teaching Hakka in different elementary schools in Taiwan. They also represented ten personal stories and experiences with regard

to the Mandarin Movement. Their views and experiences were constantly analyzed and then emergent themes were produced. The analysis of data gathered throughout the study resulted in the following findings and implications.

## **Research Findings**

**Research question 1: *What are native language education teachers' views concerning their instruction and students' learning?***

### *Motivating students' learning interest as priority*

All of the teachers in this study believed that motivating students' interest in learning Hakka was the most important priority in their Hakka instruction. Based on these teachers' views, Hakka was not a main subject for testing; meanwhile, the Hakka class was an elective class, not a compulsory class. In addition, Hakka was a minority language with few native speakers on this island. The practical usefulness of Hakka was not as important as the majority group's language (Southern Min). Therefore, how to motivate students to learn Hakka became the first priority for these teachers.

The participants in this study employed a variety of activities in order to motivate their students' learning interest. These activities included singing and dancing Hakka children's songs, game-playing, story-telling, multimedia teaching, integrating Hakka with students' other subjects (for example, Mandarin and physical education), telling Hakka riddles and speaking Hakka slang, making handicrafts related to Hakka culture, telling jokes in Hakka and playing with some traditional Hakka toys. The premise of the activities was to let students have fun in the Hakka class and maintain students' interest in

learning Hakka.

In addition to utilizing a variety of activities in their instruction, some teachers in this study also emphasized the Hakka teacher's personal impact in motivating students' interest in learning Hakka. This view was based on two factors. First, Hakka teachers encountered a situation that was unlike that of Southern Min teachers. Southern Min was the majority group language, and most students selected Southern Min for their native language class. Generally, the number of students choosing the Hakka class was small. Being Hakka teachers, some participants thought Hakka teachers needed to pay attention to how to attract students to this class.

Second, in these participants' views, students firstly had an interest in their Hakka teachers; then students would want to learn Hakka. The participants expressed that generally elementary school children liked to learn things just because they liked the teacher. According to these teachers' experiences, elementary school children did not actually know the importance of learning Hakka, nor did they understand why they needed to learn the native language. Therefore, these teachers paid attention to their style of dress, knowing children's minds and preferences, and wanting to be perceived as fashionable, thoughtful, caring and child-friendly Hakka teachers.

#### *The importance of encouragement*

All participants in this study thought that teaching the Hakka language was the first step toward its maintenance and revitalization, so encouragement was crucial in their interactions for students' learning. The encouragement took the form both of spoken

encouragement and material encouragement. In addition, the encouragement also showed in the teachers' flexible evaluation of their students' learning outcomes.

The participants found that, for children to practice speaking or to participate in class activities, they needed encouragement all the time. For most students, it was very rare to hear Hakka spoken in their daily life, so most students felt it was difficult to learn Hakka. Hence, teachers needed to play a supportive role in students' learning all the time. By doing so, students could have more confidence and gain a sense of accomplishment in learning Hakka.

In general, these participants gave their students a variety of prizes in order to encourage students' learning. The participants in this study spent their own money to buy prizes for their students, even though the salary for teaching the native language was low. The participants in this study thought this practice was worthwhile, however, believing that these encouragements could increase students' confidence and interest in learning their native language.

#### *Emphasizing the practice of speaking and listening*

All of the teachers in this study felt that the first step for transmitting Hakka to elementary school students was to develop students' speaking and listening abilities, toward basic competency in communicating in Hakka in their daily life. Hence, the teachers emphasized the importance of letting students practice listening and speaking, repeating the vocabulary and content in the Hakka textbook. In addition, the participants used common classroom words and commands, and applied their classroom management

rules in Hakka, in order to familiarize students with the target language. Since students' contact time with Hakka was very short, limited to forty minutes once a week, these teachers thought the above ways were the basic things which were helpful in cultivating an environment that let students gradually become familiar with the Hakka language.

#### *The importance of teaching Hakka culture and values*

All of the teachers in this study emphasized the importance of teaching Hakka culture and values in their Hakka instruction. First, integrating culture into their instruction had its effect in letting students have fun and high interest in leaning Hakka. Second, transmitting the Hakka language meant also transmitting the culture. These participants thought it was necessary to let the young generation have a better understanding about Hakka culture. Third, the participants felt that integrating Hakka culture into their instruction also contributed to clarifying some common misunderstandings and stereotypes about Hakka people.

Finally, many Hakka values and virtues are precious and valuable; hence it was necessary to encourage the young students to know, maintain, and preserve these Hakka values and virtues. The more spiritual aspects of Hakka culture include the spirit of persistence, diligence, frugality, an emphasis on study and education, and the importance of good character.

#### *One class per week was appropriate*

Under the particular sociocultural environment (emphasizing testing/exams), most



participants in this study thought that currently one class per week for elementary school students' learning the native language was appropriate. For these participants, the meaning of the native language program in elementary school lay in preserving and transmitting the native language and culture to the young generation, and awakening the family's awareness of speaking their mother tongue with their children. The teachers thought that adding more classes for native language in elementary schools would increase elementary school students' learning burdens and cause most people to object. The participants thought that if schools could cooperate and implement the current native language program well, at the same time, teachers could try their best. In addition, if the family could play its role well, then the revitalization/maintenance of the native language in this island would function well. Therefore, despite the fact that one class per week was very little, and students generally did not learn the native language well enough because of this limited time, the participants in this study did not think it was necessary to increase the number of hours for native language classes in elementary schools.

***Research question 2: What factors do they consider as affecting or encouraging their native language instruction?***

**Frustrating Aspects:**

**Students' motivation to learn was not high**

Most of the participants found that their students' low motivation to learn was the major frustration they encountered in their Hakka instruction. Based on these teachers' experiences, the students were not easy to calm down while in the Hakka class because

students came from different classes, and even different grades. Classroom management was a challenge for most participants in this study, including both classroom teachers and Hakka language support teachers.

In these participants' experiences, some students took a perfunctory attitude toward this Hakka class. Several factors caused this phenomenon. First, the native language was not a main subject for tests; students did not pay as close attention to learning. Second, this Hakka class was an elective class, not a compulsory class. Some students regarded the Hakka class as a time for relaxing. These students came to the class to kill time or noisily chat with other kids. Some students were late for their Hakka class, and some of the class had poor attendance.

Also, some participants expressed that there were some poorly behaved students who were kicked out by their original homeroom teachers and sent to the Hakka class. Although the Hakka teachers expressed that they tried hard to learn and improve their classroom management skills, they complained that the challenge of classroom management was a frustration. Most students had more respect for their own homeroom teachers. Students generally did not respect other subject teachers very much. The participants thought students did not care about what the Hakka language teachers said in class. As a result, there were often discipline problems in the Hakka classes. Although these teachers greatly cherished the time of the 40 minutes per week for students' learning Hakka, these teachers usually needed to take about 10 minutes to deal with students' discipline problems. Therefore, most participants in this study voiced that, as a matter of fact, students' learning outcomes were very limited.

*Family's cooperation was minimal*

Family's unsupportive cooperation and attitudes toward their children's learning the native language was another frustration for these Hakka teachers. Two situations showed this phenomenon, according to these participants' experiences.

First, some students did not continue learning Hakka after a period of time because of their parents' influence. That is, some students originally learned Hakka, but these students did not continue with their classes the next semester/year. These students' parents wanted them to learn Southern Min, a majority group language. Some parents thought Hakka was not a useful language in society. They said that few people spoke it, and it was useless for their children's future to learn a language that had very few advantages. The participants in this study thought that compared to Southern Min, maintaining and revitalizing Hakka was more difficult. Since few people in the society spoke Hakka, most parents in cities would prefer that their children learn a majority language than a minority language.

Second, in general, parents did not have great willingness to practice speaking the native language with their children at home. Based on these teachers' experiences, parents had no time or did not want to practice speaking Hakka with their children at home. Most parents paid more attention to their children's other learning subjects related to preparing for their children's future.

The Hakka teachers felt that, generally speaking, their students often forgot what they learned in the class a week earlier. Therefore, most participants in this study

expressed that they usually needed to spend a lot of time reviewing what students learned in the previous class. Also, they thought their students lacked the ability to conduct daily conversation in Hakka. These teachers thought that the main problem was the families' failure to actively practice speaking Hakka with their children at home. Most participants thought that the families' unsupportive attitudes and perceptions toward native language education was the weakest aspect in the implementation of the native language program.

*Some schools' cooperation was limited*

The participants in this study expressed that some schools' attention to practical detail in implementing the native language program was not sufficient. These details included the scheduling time and classroom availability for the native language classes, and classroom teachers' attitudes toward students' learning Hakka.

According to these participants' experience, some schools did not schedule the Hakka classes during regular class time, but in morning study time or naptime. Some schools did not have classrooms for the Hakka classes. These factors not only affected the Hakka teachers' teaching but also the students' learning mood, as well as contributing to poor student attendance.

Classroom teachers' attitude toward students' learning Hakka was another frustrating factor for most participants in this study. According to some participants in this study, some classroom teachers kicked students who behaved disruptively out of their classrooms and sent them to Hakka classes. These students usually caused discipline problems in Hakka class. In addition, some classroom teachers would make use of the

native language class time for extra studies or other activities, so they would ask students not to come to Hakka classes. As a result, some students often had to miss some of these participants' Hakka classes. This caused the students to have low attendance. Some participants felt that their status of being Hakka language support teachers was not very respected by the classroom teachers in the school. Overall, the participants felt that the other teachers did not have very supportive attitudes toward students' learning Hakka.

The various frustrations experienced by these participants while working in their schools suggest that low-level decisions to support higher-level ones are also crucial in successful implementation of maintaining/revitalizing the native languages. The decisions and attitudes of school personnel, including the principal, teachers, and administrators, play a bridge role which connects the government policy concerning implementation of the native language to the real front line of students learning the language. As Cooper (1989) stated, "The entire process of formulating and implementing is best regarded as a spiral process, beginning at the highest level of authority and, ideally, descending in widening circles through the ranks of practitioners who can support or resist putting the policy into effect" (p. 160). Other literature asserts that any school innovation, in order to be successful, must include a wide range of school staff, and must permeate and be supported by the school culture (Perez, 2004, p. 174). Since the implementation of the native language program in Taiwanese elementary schools is a top-down language planning activity, schools' cooperation, involving practical details related to implementation of the native language program, has a critical influence on the success of the whole language planning process. In this study, the text suggests that each school had

a different policy and attitude regarding the implementation of the native language program. Although the government has a policy to implement the native language program in elementary schools, the real implementing situation in each school is different.

### **Encouraging Aspects:**

#### *Bringing the native language to new learners*

The composition of the Hakka class included Hakka children and non-Hakka children. Most participants in this study related that they were glad that other ethnic groups' children also came to Hakka class to learn. Learning Hakka was not only restricted to Hakka-originated children. Other ethnic groups' children also learned Hakka. For example, Southern Min, Mainlanders, and even foreign spouses' children were in the Hakka class. This variety contributed to a broader use of Hakka language, introducing it to new users. This concurs with King's (2001) view that introducing the language to new speakers is also an important aspect of language revitalization efforts (p. 24). Further, it contributes to the knowledge and understanding of different ethnic groups on this island.

#### *Affirming the status of the Hakka language*

The implementation of the native language program contributed to promoting the status of the native language. These participants were encouraged to hear Hakka spoken in elementary school. Even though the students spoke just a few words, the status of this native language was growing. Students could freely show their Hakka competency on the

school grounds, which could let other students know that speaking this language was a natural and normal situation. At the same time, children got to know that speaking different ethnic groups' language was a natural phenomenon. This showed that the status of the native language was respected, unlike in the past, when native languages were not allowed to be used on campus. The affirmation of students' linguistic rights to the native language was put into practice in elementary schools.

The encouraging aspects experienced by these participants in some schools tells us that the implementation of the native language program has an effect in promoting the language's status. The additional activities that some schools hold for the native language also contributed to awaken people's consciousness about the importance of learning their own mother tongues. This corresponds to Fishman's (1990) concept of "ideological clarification," which is an essential first step or precursor to RLS (Reversing Language Shift). Fishman conceived this stage as consisting of "consciousness heightening and reformation" (p. 17). These participants felt encouraged that the native language was no longer regarded as a low-class language. The native language could exist naturally and normally on the elementary school campus. Hence, the linguistic right of each ethnic group's language was affirmed in elementary school.

#### *Enhancing Hakka identity and preserving culture*

Enhancing Hakka children's identities with their language and group was another encouraging influence of the native language program in elementary schools. The participants in this study were glad that some of Hakka students in their classes could

show some kind of identity with the Hakka language and group. These participants were encouraged by feeling that Hakka children's identity was strengthened after they learned their own native language. Children showed an interest in learning their mother tongue. These teachers felt validated when their students would retain the use of native language words. For example, most of the participants were glad that some of their students could actively say a few greeting words in Hakka at school or outside the school. These instances led the participants to feel encouraged. For example, Betty's students went to observe weather phenomena that Betty had told them about the year before. This showed that the students had positive feelings toward the Hakka proverbs, which are important parts of Hakka culture. Doris valued her interaction with one little boy who showed his passion for Hakka and talked with Doris in Hakka after class. That boy could positively express that he was a Hakka. Some children were proud of being Hakka people, and would not feel ashamed about speaking their language. Again, such experiences led some participants in this study to feel very encouraged. This phenomena is as Jacobs (1998) indicated: "When children are allowed to learn their native languages, they gain pride and confidence in cultural identity, have an increased sense of self-esteem, and gain security in knowing their heritage and culture."(p.122). Also, learning one's ancestral language is essential to positive cultural identity development (Fishman, 1991; Stiles, 1997; Wong-Fillmore, 1986). Knowing the language of one's ancestors greatly contributes to a sense of belonging (Brittain, 2002; Genesse, n. d.).

In addition, other implementation activities were helpful in attracting students of different ethnic groups to learn and understand the native languages on this island.



Students had opportunities for contact and exposure to each ethnic group's languages, which could contribute to enhancing the positive identity of languages spoken by the minority. This consequence is implied by Dorian (1987), who argued that community and school support of a threatened language can mitigate the negative attitudes towards the language and its speakers. These attitudes typically accompany language decline, and have been internalized by speakers and potential speakers of the language (p. 64).

#### Other implementation activities

Some schools offered additional implementation activities which helped extend the effect of the native language program. These activities gave the participants in this study great encouragement. The activities included Native Language Day (one day per week), broadcasting songs in the native language, native language shows held at the end of the semester, Hakka speech contests, Hakka camps during summer break, etc. These additional activities were helpful in motivating students' interest in learning Hakka, enhancing some Hakka children's identity toward their ethnic group, and in affirming the status of Hakka language as "normal" in elementary school. In some of these participants' experiences, although the native language classes met just once per week, the native language program still had an effect because of these additional activities.

***Research question 3: What is the impact of the Mandarin Movement on teachers' views toward their current native language instruction and education?***

From these participants' stories regarding the Mandarin Movement in their experience prior to their involvement in Hakka teaching, it is evident that the elementary school's role in the acquisition language planning process is critical. The elementary school's important role showed in (1) its cultivation of students' language use habits and perceptions toward different languages (the status of different languages), and (2) its influential role in bringing a language from the school domain to the home domain.

Under the influence of the Mandarin Movement in school, most participants in this study held different perceptions toward the status of their own mother tongue and Mandarin in their elementary school days. Some participants expressed the view that Mandarin was regarded as having a higher status, while Hakka was regarded as a lower-class language and was only spoken at home. Teachers and schools at that early time adopted some forceful methods to prohibit students' speaking their mother tongue in school, contributing to the sharp distinction between home use language and school use language (school-Mandarin, home-Hakka); thus most participants at that time thought that Mandarin was superior to their own mother tongue. Meanwhile, we see that with some participants in this study, their habit of speaking Mandarin in their early days already extended from the school domain to the home domain.

With the current implementation of the native language program in elementary schools, these participants' involvement firstly let them be aware of the importance of maintaining and revitalizing their own mother tongue. Some participants began to speak their mother tongue at home with their family members. Again, we see the great power of the elementary school in the acquisition language planning process. Regarding the task of

maintaining and revitalizing the native language, the participants in this study expressed the hope that, after students develop appropriate perceptions about different languages in school, they could bring this positive influence of different ethnic groups to their home.

In order to maintain and revitalize the native language, the implementation of the native language program will first have its effect by letting students know that speaking their mother tongue is natural. Then the influence extends from the school domain to the home domain, in order to awake the parents' awareness in maintaining and revitalizing their mother tongues. And then gradually the native language can be spoken in the domain of the home.

From these participants' past stories after leaving their hometowns, their narratives also suggested that the school has an important role in helping students (the future citizens) develop appropriate attitudes and sufficient knowledge about different ethnic groups in a society. That is, it should cultivate in students the ability to get along with and develop tolerance toward different ethnic groups. From these participants' past stories, we see that although Mandarin served as a convenient communication tool among different ethnic groups in this island, the Mandarin Movement also had the effect of contributing to insufficient knowledge/understanding toward the minority group's people, language, and culture. Thus, due to the insufficient understanding, some misunderstanding/stereotypes toward the minority group existed, leading members of the minority group to be afraid to admit their ethnic identity, language and culture.

Under the implementation of the native language program in elementary school, students could have opportunities to cultivate appropriate attitudes toward different

languages and ethnic groups' people in this island. Today these participants would like to infuse Hakka-born kids in elementary school with a positive identity toward their own ethnic group's language and culture. Non-Hakka children also could have opportunities to know and understand Hakka culture and language. The participants in this study hoped that the learning of Hakka language in school could have some effect in the children's family. That is, they hoped that the process of maintaining/revitalizing the Hakka language could start from the school domain and move to the family domain.

### **Additional Findings**

Two additional findings were also generated from the data. Before starting this research, the researcher's assumption about the Mandarin Movement was that its influence would be felt in negative ways. However, in this research, the participants' views and experiences toward the Mandarin Movement were not all negative.

First, the Mandarin Movement had its positive influence for different ethnic groups on this island. That is, Mandarin served as a common communication tool among different ethnic groups. The text showed that after the participants left their Hakka hometowns to go to big cities, speaking Mandarin became their safest tool for communicating with people from different ethnic groups. Some participants recalled that they did not express their Hakka identities and spoke Mandarin all the time. Therefore, these participants did not encounter ethnic conflicts with other groups. After going into society, speaking Mandarin became a protective umbrella for the participants in this study. This was the positive influence of the Mandarin Movement.

Second, the data suggested that several factors caused the decline of the Hakka language. These factors included the Mandarin Movement, the minority status of the Hakka group, and the general public's stereotype about Hakka people. Indeed, in the past, the Mandarin Movement labeled speaking Hakka as a low-class behavior, while speaking Mandarin was more a high-class behavior. Several participants in this study recalled that they had these perceptions toward Hakka and Mandarin, and gradually stopped speaking their mother tongue. In addition, it seemed that knowing Hakka was not very useful for survival in society, because just a few people spoke the minority language. Therefore, some native Hakka speakers chose instead to speak the majority group's language—Southern Min, which was a more useful language for integrating into society. Furthermore, the stereotyped image of Hakka people as stingy and impoverished also led some Hakka to hide their identities. These individuals became the so-called “invisible people.” It is reasonable to assume that these Hakka would not want to transmit their language to their next Hakka generation. As Kulick (1992) stated, “The conceptions people have about language, children, the self, and the place of these in those people's interpretation of their social world are central to an understanding of why they come to abandon their language” (p. 17).

### **Implications**

Several implications can be drawn from this research. First, attention should be paid to improving school administrators and classroom teachers' awareness/attitudes toward the implementation of the native language program. As we see from the research findings,

the elementary school has influential power in developing students' attitudes toward different languages and ethnic groups' people. Meanwhile, the research findings also showed that the classroom teachers' attitudes are factors that frustrated the participants in their teaching. Although the Ministry of Education announced that each public elementary school needed to open the native languages classes for students, from the research findings we know that the real situation of each school was one of less than full cooperation in terms of putting the program into practice. It seems that, in reality, schools may not have a supportive attitude toward the implementation of the native language program. Although reducing the gap between the intention of the governmental policy and its practice in the schools is a huge project that requires constant vigilance, it is necessary that each elementary school needs to work hard to help cultivate an environment that helps students' learning the native languages. For instance, the educational authorities could organize regular workshops or seminars to let classroom teachers have a better understanding and awareness of the native languages in this island, and to cultivate appropriate attitudes toward students' learning the native languages.

Second, the family's cooperation and parents' attitudes toward their children's learning the native language needs to be improved. In Fishman's (1991) Reversing Language Shift theory, the most critical domain where efforts to stabilize or restore language should be concentrated is the home/neighborhood/community. Fishman stresses that the vitality of a language lies in informal interactions in the home and community. Based on the research findings of this study, the family's cooperation was still very weak. Overall, parents did not have a very supportive attitude toward their children's mother

tongue learning. Hornberger & King (1997) point out that the contribution of any school-based initiative to the long-term vitality of a language must be evaluated in the light of the criterion of intergenerational transmission. Experience has taught us that the duty and responsibility of revitalizing a language must not be left solely upon the shoulders of the school (p. 314). Hence, Hornberger & King further suggest that it is necessary to educate parents' awareness in speaking their mother tongues with their children at home. Just as in the Lagunas case (with Quichua), more is needed than simply giving an occasional pep-talk to parents at school meetings about the importance of using the native language with their children (p. 314).

Third, attention should be paid to awakening the public's awareness of the importance of young generation's learning the native languages. Based on the findings, we know that whether parents or the classroom teachers or schools' administrators are concerned, their unsupportive attitude toward elementary school students' learning the native language results from the whole society's being more focused on testing or pragmatic thinking. That is, the native languages, especially for the minority languages (Hakka and aboriginal languages), are generally deemed not useful for preparing children's future. Hence, the government could help by educating the public about the importance of the native languages, perhaps by employing the power of the mass media to advocate the importance of maintaining/revitalizing the native languages on this island. In addition, governments can also require competence in a selected language as a prerequisite for civil service employment. In countries where the civil service is one of the few ways to advance economically and socially, this can be a significant motivating

factor. Stipulating a language that governments use for legislative debate and the language in which laws are written and government documents are issued is another means that can be used to promote a selected language or language variety (Fasold, 1984, p. 253).

Fourth, more attention needs to be paid in teacher education program to enhancing the native language teachers' teaching expertise. As we see from the findings, most of the participants in this study expressed that one class per week for the native language class was appropriate; there was no need to add more classes about the native language for the elementary school students. Appropriate language learning pedagogy suggests frequency as a success factor. Therefore, the quality of the native language teachers is vital. Also, from the research findings, we know that a teacher's skills (the concept of encouragement, teachers' personal attraction, emphasizing speaking and listening abilities, and teaching culture) in motivating students to learn were considered by these participants to be important in native language instruction. So, how can the quality of the native language teachers be ensured? Although these language support teachers were certificated as language support teachers, and they all participated in a 36-hour workshop training before becoming involved in the Hakka teaching, as a matter of fact, their teaching expertise and professional training for teaching is not sufficient. Meanwhile these language support teachers have come from diverse backgrounds. This is perhaps the reason that why some classroom teachers in elementary schools did not show respect for these language support teachers. Compared to the formal teachers in elementary schools, these language support teachers did not have sufficient professional preparation before



entering the native language teaching field. They were regarded as “second class citizens.” Hence, in order to guarantee the language support teachers’ professional expertise, the government needs to require that these language support teachers participate in further in-service training or workshops in order to enhance their professional expertise. Although in this study, some participants expressed that they joined the Hakka Language Support Teachers’ Association to improve their expertise, not all language support teachers would like to do so. It depended on the teacher’s personal willingness. In summary, since teachers play an important role in the task of maintaining and revitalizing the native language, it is necessary to improve the quality of the language support teachers’ own education.

Fifth, the native language textbooks should be more focused on daily conversation themes or topics. Currently the structure of the Hakka textbooks is mainly focused on recitating poems and memorizing vocabulary. From the findings, we know that these teachers thought that emphasizing speaking and listening abilities was the most important thing in maintaining and revitalizing the native language. Also from the findings, we know that students lack sufficient opportunity to practice speaking. Consequently, most students lack the ability to conduct daily conversation in the native language. The one class time is the only native language contact opportunity for these young students. Therefore, along with having qualified teachers, attention must also be given to the teaching materials that these teachers employ.

Finally, the funding from the government for supporting the native language program should be maintained or increased. This will provide sufficient support for

improving the teaching materials and implementing the native language program. Meanwhile, steady funding from the government will also help each school to hold activities to help maintain and revitalize the native language.

### **Limitations**

This study was focused on exploring the views of a group of ten Hakka language teachers who worked in the north of Taiwan, not including teachers who teach Southern Min and aboriginal languages. Therefore, the findings are not expected to be applicable to or representative of all native language teachers on this island. However, the researcher provided the detailed descriptions of data in context in order to aid readers who would like to transfer the findings to similar contexts.

In addition, this research topic seemed to involve some political issues that might have created pressure for the participants. Regarding the Mandarin Movement and the native language program in elementary schools, these issues involved the divergent policies of two different political parties. The Mandarin Movement was KMT's policy in the past, whereas the native language program belongs to the new policy that DPP set after they became the ruling party. Therefore, many people thought that the implementation of the native language program was a form of welfare that the DPP gave to the ethnic groups except for the Mainlanders. Since the aim of DPP is that it would like to see Taiwan become an independent country in the future, complicated feelings were involved whenever people talked about things related to the political issues. For example, some people might be in favor of some of DPP's policies, but they are not in favor of the

other aims of the DPP. For this study's purpose, I just would like to focus on the issue of language maintenance and revitalization itself, not involving people's political position. To reduce this sort of pressure, I explained to these teachers at the beginning of the study that this study was to explore their experiences and thoughts about the language issues, not their political positions. As a researcher, I tried to be a neutral position while conducting interviews with the participants. However, regardless of how carefully the researcher tried to minimize any pressure on the participants in expressing their views toward the research topic, it appeared to be inevitable that the topic was a sensitive one to the participants. This resulted in difficulty for the researcher in finding native language teachers to participate in this study. Several participants who volunteered to participate in this study dropped out after the first interview. Afterwards the researcher tried hard to recruit teachers who would like to participate in this study.

### **Future Research**

Several research topics for future studies are proposed here. Firstly, as this research focused on teachers' views toward the implementation of the native language program, future research might be conducted on students' perspectives about their learning native language in elementary schools. Furthermore, in this study, the elementary schools where these participants worked were located in the city or suburban areas. Future researches could focus on participants who work in elementary schools that are located in rural areas. It would be interesting to make some kind of comparison of the different views that might result, concerning the implementation of the native language program.

In addition, based on the findings of this research, there could be a focus on the elementary school administrators' views on the native language program. Considering the fact the decision-making about the implementation of the native language program is often made at the level of administration, it would be meaningful to investigate the school administrators' views on the native language program. Meanwhile, it would help to identify any gaps between the government's policy and these school administrators' expectations on the implementation of the native language program, in order to suggest possible solutions to overcome the differences.

### **Personal Reflection**

Now to return to my original personal motivation for conducting this research, I have a better understanding about why Hakka language was declining, after conducting this study. From this study, I learned that it is not appropriate to attribute the Hakka language's declining situation to any one cause. It is about how this ethnic group looks at their own language, and it involves also the whole social context, political power, social factors and the cultural environment. All of these factors need to be taken into consideration while addressing the issue of the decline of a minority language.

These participants' great dedication and devotion to Hakka teaching is greatly admirable. I am grateful that some of the participants who originally did not recognize their ethnic group and language began to reconnect with their roots in Hakka because of their involvement in Hakka teaching. It is also personally meaningful to know that the native language program provides a chance to transmit the cultural heritage and language

to the next generation. Meanwhile, the implementation of the native language program also provides opportunities to educate the young generation about how to have a tolerant attitude toward different ethnic groups' language and culture.

This study also widened my concern about minority languages in many countries in this world. Facing the reality and pragmatic considerations, how can these minority languages survive? The government officials of the country needs to have a wise and broad view about language planning policy, so that other ethnic groups' languages in the world can be maintained and revitalized. Hopefully in the future, no matter how the political environment changes in Taiwan, the government will consider how vitally important minority languages are to the long-term cultural makeup of the country.

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## **Vita**

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